THE

DIVINE COMEDY

OF

DANTE ALIGHIERI.

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH VERSE

BY

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PREFACE TO THE THIRD EDITION.

AFTER an interval of several years, the translator returns to his work with renewed ardour; and, having devoted much care to the present edition, hopes he has succeeded in effecting considerable improvements, especially in the Paradiso.

A general Introduction is prefixed, entitled "The Spirit of Dante," in which the object of the Divina Comedia is more fully developed than in the Introductions to the several parts of the poem. In illustration of this new essay the Prose Works of Dante have been resorted to. As these have not been translated, mere reference to the "De Monarchiâ," written in Latin, and to the "Convito" in Italian, would have been useless to the English reader. Copious extracts have therefore been appended to "The Spirit of Dante;" and from the perusal of these, a more intimate acquaintance with Dante's mind will be obtained than by study of those ponderous commentaries which have long weighed down the Poet and his Poem.

The Notes have been compressed, to suit the plan of footnotes now first adopted; and the text is frequently explained in Dante's own words by quotation from the important works above referred to.

The present translation of the Comedia was originally dedicated—the Inferno to Lord Brougham, the Purgatorio to Dr. Howley (late Archbishop of Canterbury), and the Paradiso to Lord Denman—all ardent admirers of Dante, and most kind in the encouragement and assistance they afforded to the translator. To other friends he is also much indebted, and especially to Lady Dacre, to the Hon. and

Very Rev. Dr. Howard, Dean of Lichfield, to Mr. Panizzi, and last, not least, to Count Marioni, from whose exquisite taste, and marvellous knowledge of Dante, the translator has derived the greatest advantage in preparing the present edition.

The gloom and severity which characterise the opening of the poem having deterred many from persevering in the study of Dante, the translator begs to recommend his readers not to dwell on the horrors of the Inferno, but to speed their flight with the poet to the calm regions of the Purgatorio, and the sublime rapture of the Paradiso.

As Dante has been much blamed for anachronism, and for grouping together heathens and Christians, the following quotation will not be out of place. "Our ancestors of the middle ages were not particular in drawing that strong line of demarcation between the classical, Jewish, and Christian periods that we do. They saw only Christendom everywhere: they regarded the past only in relation to Christianity.—Hence we find in the early ecclesiastical monuments and edifices such a strange assembly of pagan, scriptural, and Christian worthies. . . . We must remember that the personages here brought together in their Christian character belong no more to our earth, but to heaven and eternity; for them there is no longer time or place. They are assembled together in the perpetual communion of saints." (Sacred and Legendary Art. By Mrs. Jameson. Introduction.

THE SPIRIT OF DANTE.

The leading idea in Dante's mind was—God. On God his thoughts were continually fixed. His love, His glory, were ever present to his mind.*

In his view, the universe is a manifestation of God—an outpouring of His splendour, infinitely communicated, yet ever undiminished—a mirror, in which are reflected the Power, the Wisdom, and the Love of the great Creator.†

In the unity of God, Dante recognised the fountain of that order which prescribes to all things their appropriate functions, and regulates the universe as by one unerring law.‡

Seeing all this admirable order spring from unity,§ Dante considered heavenly government as the true pattern of earthly; and would fain have the kingdoms of this world all subjected to the paternal control of one supreme Governor, who should compose their jarring interests, and maintain on earth that peace which reigns in heaven.‖

How opposite to such ideal perfection was the condition of the world when Dante wept over its manifold calamities! Instead of that universal peace which prevailed at the birth of our Saviour, under what he considered the divinely-ordained government of a Roman Emperor, he saw kingdom arrayed against kingdom—state against state—citizen against citizen—and vice so dominant, that earth might rather be deemed a picture of hell than of heaven.

The authority of the Cæsars he saw had been usurped by a power which professed to be spiritual, but which actually was of a most worldly character, arrogating to itself a pomp and dominion wholly inconsistent with the example and precepts of the Saviour.—His command that the things belonging to God and the things belonging to Cæsar should be kept distinct, had been subverted by an ambitious and rapacious priesthood. The two great means of civilization

* Par. x. 54; xiv. 87; xxvi. 55; xxviii. 3, 9; xxx. 40.
† Par. xiii. 57; xxix. 11, 142; xxx. 100. ‡ Par. i. 103, etc.
§ De Monarchiâ, B. i. pp. 24, 50 (Fraticelli's edit.)
‖ De Mon. B. i. p. 48. Convito, Trat. iv. cap. 4.

had thus been confounded.* The sword of Justice, entrusted to the Emperor, and the sword of the Spirit, entrusted to the Pastor of the Church, had ceased to exercise their distinct and appropriate functions. The "two suns" which were ordained to illuminate the world†—the one dispensing to nations the blessings of order and peace, the other shining inwardly in the hearts of men, and by its gentle influence disposing them to respect the paternal government of the civil power—these two luminaries were no more to be distinguished: the one had quenched the other;‡ and as the fruits of this rebellion against the law of Heaven, irreligion and anarchy prevailed throughout the earth.

With tears of sorrow and indignation, Dante wept over the vices and miseries of his countrymen. He saw them led astray by the evil example of one who was intended to be their spiritual guide and master§—who sitting in the place of Christ, made a mockery of His humility, and appropriating to himself the revenues of the Church, to the exclusion of their rightful possessors, the unbefriended children of poverty,‖ aspired to a throne exalted far above the kings of the earth. Such was the view which Christendom presented to Dante, when in the full maturity of age his transcendent intellect awoke to a sense of the miseries around him, and traced their origin to an unhallowed perversion of divine institutions. The cause of the evil once apparent, Dante hesitated not to apply a remedy—regardless of danger to himself in denouncing the guilty, however exalted their rank in Church or State.¶

To redress the grievances of a benighted people—to redeem them from vice, from wretchedness, and from misgovernment,—to inspire them with a reverence for God, and for those laws which He had established for their benefit,—this was the "honoured enterprise" Dante undertook—the grand aim of that "Sacred Poem" to which he thenceforth devoted his entire faculties.

He himself tells us, that rejecting all subtle investigation into the many senses in which his work may be understood, "the object of the whole and of each part is simply, to rescue the living from a state of misery, and to conduct them to

* Purg. xvi. 127. † Purg. xvi. 107. ‡ Par. xvi. 109.
§ Inf. xix. 104. Purg. xvi. 58, 103. Par. ix. 132; xviii. 126.
‖ Par. xii. 88. ¶ Par. xvii. 119, 132

happiness;"* that, "moved with compassion for the miserable condition of those whom he had left behind in the vulgar pastures, he was desirous to communicate to others a portion of the food he had gathered at the feet of those who sate at the blessed table."†

In this view of the Divina Comedia, all minor aims, real or imaginary, are lost and absorbed in the grand idea he proposed to himself. In this view also is exploded the prejudice of judging the man and the poet by the Inferno only. The Inferno becomes mainly an introduction to the poem—a means to an end—a warning to humanity passing through this vale of tears to the regions of eternity. Dante himself warns us not to dwell on the miseries of the tormented, lest we should be dismayed and diverted from our lofty aim.‡ The blessings which follow—the renewal of the soul—the joys of heaven—these are the themes on which he loves to expatiate, luring on his readers by the exquisite tenderness of the Purgatorio, to the unequalled sublimity of the Paradiso, where light and love and harmony are the sole elements of this most perfect masterpiece.

Speculations on the various allusions embraced in so extensive a work may have been interesting to Italians five centuries ago, but they concern not us in the present day. To us, Dante is interesting, not only because his poetry is of the highest order, but because he writes on subjects which deeply concern the whole human family. We regard Dante, not as Guelf or Ghibeline,—as Papist or Antipapist,—as Florentine or Italian. We read his life in the thirstings of his soul for the progress of the human race, and his anticipations of its ultimate happiness. We see in him the Christian—the patriot—the abjurer of party—the asserter of liberty—the defender of truth—the reviver of literature and civilisation; —an earnest and enlightened man, whose mission it was, not to preach new principles or new doctrines, not to arrogate to himself apostolic powers,§ but to shew how far the existing government of the world had deviated from that system which God had prescribed, and by a contrast of vice and virtue, misery and happiness, to stimulate mankind to a recovery of their lost inheritance.

* Dedication of the Paradiso.
† Convito, Trat. i. cap. I.
‡ Purg. x. 109.
§ Inf. ii. 32.

EXTRACTS FROM DANTE'S PROSE WORKS,

IN ILLUSTRATION OF THE FOREGOING ESSAY, AND OF THE POEM GENERALLY.

"O ineffable Wisdom . . . how weak is our mind to comprehend Thee! And you, for whose benefit and gratification I write, in what blindness ye live,—not raising your eyes above to these things, but keeping them fixed in the mire of your foolishness."—Convito, Trat. iii. cap. 5.

"It is the intention of God that every created thing should represent the Divine likeness as far as its nature allows, according to the saying, 'Let us make man in our own image.' And though it cannot be said that inferior natures are made in the image of God, still, all may be said to bear a similitude to Him, since the whole universe is nothing else but a trace of the Divine goodness."—De Monarchiâ, B. i. p. 24 (Fraticelli's edition.)

"Be it known in the first place that God and Nature make nothing idle; but that whatever he brings into being is ordained to some active purpose. For the creature is not the ultimate object of the Creator, as such, but the proper operation of that creature. Hence, not the end for the being; but the being is created for the end."—De Mon. B. i. p. 11.

"Unerring Providence has appointed to man two ends to be aimed at,—viz. the happiness of this life, which consists in the active operation of his peculiar function, and is figured by the Terrestrial Paradise; and the happiness of the life eternal, which consists in the enjoyment of the Divine aspect, to which man's own proper virtue cannot ascend, unless assisted by Divine light,—which is represented by the Heavenly Paradise. To these two kinds of happiness, as it were to different conclusions, we must arrive by different means. For to the first we arrive by means of philosophical studies; following them up by the practice of moral and intellectual virtue. The second we reach by means of spiritual writings, which surpass human reason; following them up by the practice of the theological virtues, viz. hope and charity."—De Mon. B. iii. p. 194.

"The best state of man is that in which he is most free . . . . and the foundation of our liberty is—freedom of the will, which many prate of, but few understand. . . . And this liberty, or source of all liberty, is the greatest blessing that God hath bestowed on human nature; since by means of this [illegible] secured our happiness here as men, and our happiness hereafter as gods." - De Mon. p. 36, 38.

"Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. *He Himself is the rock upon which the Church is built.*" (In Dante's own words, "Fundamentum aliud nemo potest ponere, præter id quod positum est, qui est Christus Jesus. *Ipse est petra*, super quam ædificata est Ecclesia.")—De Monarchiâ, B. iii. p. 170.

"Relying on that reverence which a pious son owes his father and mother,—pious towards Christ, pious towards the Church, pious towards the Pastor, pious towards all Christians, I commence in this book a struggle for the preservation of the truth." (This struggle for the restoration of the Church to its primitive purity and simplicity is carried on throughout the Divina Comedia.)—De Mon. B. iii. p. 138.

"Before the Church are the Old and New Testament. . . . . After the Church are Traditions, which they call Decretals. . . . It follows therefore that the authority of the Church depends not on traditions, but traditions on the Church." (In Dante's words: "Ante quidem Ecclesiam sunt vetus et novum Testamentum. . . . Post Ecclesiam vero sunt traditiones, quas Decretales dicunt," &c.)—De Mon. B. iii. p. 136.

"Every divine law is found in one or other of the two Testaments; but in neither can I find that the care of temporal matters was given to the priesthood. On the contrary, I find that the first priests were removed from them by law, and the later priests by command of Christ to his disciples" ("Omnis namque divina lex, duorum testamentorum gremio continetur: in quo quidem gremio reperire non possum, temporalium sollicitudinem sive curam sacerdotio primo, vel novissimo commendatam fuisse," &c.)—De Mon. B. iii. p. 186.

"It is manifest that universal peace is of all things best suited to the promotion of human happiness. . . . Hence, the voice from heaven spoke not of riches, nor of honours, nor of beauty, but of peace. For the heavenly host cried: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards all men.' "—De Mon. B. i. pp. 14, 16.

"Since the human mind, in limited possession of earth, does not rest, but ever desires to obtain glory, as we see by experience, wars and discord successively arise between kingdoms, . . . and thus happiness is frustrated. Wherefore, in order to do away with these woes and their causes, it is necessary . . . that there should be a monarch, *i.e.* one sole prince, who, possessing every thing, and unable to desire more, should keep kings content within the boundaries of their kingdoms, so as to secure peace among them, that states may reform, neighbours love one another, families obtain all their wants; by the attainment of which peace man enjoys happiness. . . . . . Wherefore it is evident that to the universal perfection of the universal religion of the human race, there is need of one steersman as it were, who considering the different conditions of the world, and regulating various and necessary duties, should have a universal and unquestionable right of government. And this office is called *par excellence*, "Imperium," without any addition, because it is the commandment of all other commandments; and thence he who is appointed to this office is called "Imperadore," because he is the commander of all commandments; and what he declares is law to all, and ought to be obeyed by all . . . and thus it is manifest that the Imperial majesty and authority is the highest in human society."—Convito, Trat. iv. B. 4.

"I affirm that the temporal kingdom does not receive being from the spiritual. . . . It does not follow, because God acted by means of his messenger Samuel, that the Vicar of God can do the like. For God does, and will do, many things by means of the angels, which the Vicar of God, the suc-

cessor of St. Peter, cannot do. . . . For Christ said to Peter: 'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven,' *i.e.* I will make you the door-keeper of the kingdom of heaven. He then adds, 'And whatsoever thou shalt bind,' &c. *i.e.* shalt bind and loose whatever relates to that office (Et sic signum universale quod includitur in '*quodcumque*,' contrahitur in sua distributione ab officio clavium regni cœlorum. Et sic assumendo, vera est illa propositio: absoluta vero non, ut patet); and therefore I affirm that, although the successor of Peter, according to the requirement of the office committed to Peter, may bind and loose; it does not follow that he can bind or loose the decrees or laws of the Empire. . . . For the usurpation of right does not constitute right. . . . 'My kingdom,' Christ said, 'is not of this world,' *i.e.*—not that Christ, who is God, is not Lord of this world, . . . but that he is an example of the Church, which had not the care of this kingdom. . . . It is therefore sufficiently proved that the authority of the Empire does not in the least depend on the Church (ab Ecclesia minime dependere.) . . . It is clear that the temporal authority of the monarch descends upon him without any medium from the Fountain of universal authority."—De Mon. B. iii. pp. 146 158, 176, 190, 192, 198. (Fraticelli.)

"It is contrary to the duty entrusted to the Emperor to rend the Empire . . . *If, as they say*, some dignities were alienated from the Empire by Constantine . . . the Church had no power to receive them as a possession, but only as a dispenser of fruits for the poor."—De Mon. B. iii. pp. 168, 170, 174. (See also Inf. xix. 91; Purg. xvi. 127; Par. xxii. 83; xxvii. 40.)

"Let it be understood, that by 'my love,' in this allegory, is always understood this study (of philosophy) which is—the application of the mind to that thing of which it is enamoured. . . . By love, I mean the study I underwent in order to win the love of this Lady. . . . Philosophy is a loving exercise of wisdom, which is mostly exercised towards God, since in Him exists the highest wisdom and the highest love. . . . This love is manifest in the use of wisdom, which use produces wonderful beauties, *i.e.* contentment in every situation of life, and contempt of those things which others allow to become their masters."—Convito, Trat. ii. cap. 16; iii. 12, 13.

"Oh! during how many nights, when the eyes of others were reposing in sleep, were mine contemplating the habitation of my love."—Convito, Trat. iii. cap. 1.

"She" (Wisdom) "is useful to all people, since her aspect assists our Faith, which is useful above all things to the whole human race, since Faith is that by which we escape eternal death, and obtain eternal life."—Convito, Trat. iii. cap. 7.

"The life of my heart, *i.e.* of my inner man, is wont to be a sweet thought,—a thought which frequently ascends to God;—*i.e.* I contemplate in thought the kingdom of the blessed."—Convito, Trat. ii. cap. 8.

"Christ is the way, the truth and the light; the way, because by it we proceed without obstacle to immortal happiness; the truth, because He admits not any error; the light, because he dissipates in us the darkness of worldly ignorance."—Convito, Trat. ii. cap. 9.

"Among all follies, that is the most stolid, vile and damnable, which admits a belief that after this life there is no other: since if we consult the

Scriptures, the philosophers, and other wise writers, all agree in this,—that there is in us a part which is immortal."—Convito, Trat. ii. cap. 9.

"Every thing desires its own perfection, and in this rests all its desire; and for this is every thing desired. And this" (thirst after righteousness) "is that desire which seems to make every gratification deficient, since no gratification in this life is so great as to banish that thirst from the mind." Convito, Trat. iii. cap. 6.

"The greater part of mankind live according to sense, and not according to reason, like children;—and, possessing only an outward knowledge of things, see not this goodness, which is ordained to a certain end—the eyes of their reason being closed, so that they cannot behold this."—Convito, Trat. i. cap. 4.

"Oh, happy those few who sit at that table where the bread of angels is eaten; and miserable those who partake of food in common with beasts." Convito, Trat. i. cap. 1.

"When one speaks of a man's living, it is implied that he uses his reason, which is his special life, and the use of his most noble part. Wherefore, he who divests himself of reason, and uses only his sensitive part, does not live as a man, but as a beast."—Convito, Trat. ii. cap. 8.

"To give, and benefit one person is good; but to give, and benefit many, much better,—as bearing a resemblance to the benefits of God, who is the universal Benefactor."—Convito, Trat. i. cap. 8.

MEMOIR OF DANTE.

DANTE was born at Florence in 1265, banished in 1302, and died at Ravenna in 1321. He supposes his poem to commence in 1300, when he was at the age of 35. As it was not finished for several years afterwards, he was thus enabled to allude in a prophetical manner to many events which had actually taken place.

Dante derived his lineage from the noble family of the Alighieri. He received a learned education under the instruction of Brunetto Latini, the most distinguished scholar of the age, and applied himself to literature and science with astonishing ardour and success. "I so weakened my eyes," he says, "with reading, that the stars appeared to me studded with a kind of whiteness; but by long rest in cool places, and bathing my eyes in pure water I wholly recovered my former sight."* At the age of 24 he became a soldier, and gained great distinction in the field.

In his boyhood Dante conceived a strong affection for Beatrice, the daughter of Foico Portinari. He himself tells us, in his Vita Nuova, that Beatrice was scarcely nine years old when he first saw her. "I speak the truth," he adds, "when I say that at that moment the spirit of life which dwells in the most secret chamber of the heart began to tremble so violently, that I felt it dreadfully in every pulse... From that time forward love ruled my soul;.... and I saw in her so many noble and praiseworthy qualities, that assuredly it may be said of her in the words of the poet Homer: 'She does not appear to be the daughter of mortal man, but of God.'" This passion increased with his age; and Beatrice first inspired him with that love of poetry which proved his consolation amid all the subsequent calamities of his eventful life. What were the obstacles to their union we are not informed; but the cause may perhaps be found in the violent family disputes and political schisms which in that age were carried to an extent not easily imagined. She married Simone de' Bardi, and died in the 24th year of her age. Her death

* Convito, Trat. iii. l. 9.

caused Dante the greatest grief; and it appears to have been with the view of distracting his mind from the melancholy into which he was plunged, that his friends exerted themselves to bring about a marriage between him and Gemma, a lady of the Donati family. By her he had five sons and a daughter. The memory, however, of Beatrice was so little effaced, that his devotion to her, after her death, acquired an increased intensity. And where is the difficulty of believing that a creature of superior beauty and excellence, who in her life-time inspired Dante with so deep a passion, should, after death, be invested by the poet with angelic brightness, and exalted to the mansions of heaven?

From this time Beatrice is transformed into a purely ideal being, and becomes not only the guardian Angel of Dante, but in his poem assumes a most exalted character as the personification of heavenly Wisdom. Henceforth she is a theme on which the Poet descants in descriptions of endless variety and beauty.* And worthy of the "Beauty of Holiness" are the divine lays in which Dante has enshrined his sainted Beatrice; thus holding with her an uninterrupted intercourse, and soaring on the wings of devotion to the highest realms of bliss and glory.†

The factions of the Guelfs and Ghibelines had long distracted Italy—the former, partisans of the pope—the latter, of the Emperors, to whom, as heirs of the Cæsars, Italy belonged, and whose right had been acknowledged, till the Pope, enriched by the gifts of succeeding Emperors, assumed a temporal as well as a spiritual dominion.

By birth Dante was a Guelf, and to this party he had hitherto been attached;—attaining such reputation as a Statesman, that he was employed on several embassies, and looked up to for advice in all emergencies. When he was thirty-five years of age, and acting as one of the Priors or

* See Par. xviii. 16, and xxvii. 91, xxx. 19.

† The Beatrice of Dante represents under one name several characters, similar, but not the same. In the Vita Nuova, written in his youth, she is the living beauty with whose personal charms he was enamoured. On her death, he had recourse to the consolations of Philosophy; and to Philosophy he transfers the title of Beatrice in his Convito, and in the terrestrial Paradise of the Purgatorio. In the Paradiso he personifies in her, heavenly Wisdom. (See Convito, Trat. ii. cap. 16. Trat. iii. cap. 1.) Her influence over Dante is beautifully described in his confessions. Purg. xxxi.

chief magistrates of Florence in the year 1300,* the Guelfs quarrelled among themselves, and divided into the factions of the Neri and Bianchi.

The Bianchi being in some measure inclined to the Ghibelines, ancient animosities were revived with increased fury, and the two parties soon came to blows. By the advice of Dante, whose impartiality and disregard for all private feelings were remarkably evinced at this crisis, the leaders of both parties were banished. Another set of Magistrates, however, coming soon after into office, recalled the Bianchi; when the Neri had recourse to Pope Boniface VIII., who was well pleased to embrace any opportunity of restoring the ascendancy of the Guelfs.

At the instigation of Boniface, Charles of Valois, brother to the King of France, undertook an expedition against Florence. Making the most solemn promises to the Republic that he would act as a mediator only, he was admitted into the city. By flattery and deceit he cajoled both parties,* till he had acquired power; and then threw the leaders of the Bianchi into prison, and permitted the Neri, who returned with him, to commit the most atrocious outrages. Houses were pillaged to gratify the avarice of Charles; and sentence of exile and confiscation was passed on 600 citizens. Among these was Dante, who having excited the hostility of Pope Boniface by resisting the introduction of foreigners into Florence, and being at this time on an embassy to Rome, fell a victim to the machinations of his enemy. Thus he suddenly found himself a banished man, condemned to be burnt to death, and without even the power of returning to bid a last adieu to his family.

Driven from his country, Dante was now necessarily thrown among the Bianchi who were exiled at the same time with himself, and induced to side with a party composed chiefly of the Ghibelines, to whom he had been for the greater part of his life opposed. And hence arises the monstrous injustice, which Dante's Biographers have successively been guilty of, in calling him the fierce Ghibeline, and the vindictive assailant of the Guelfs. As a true patriot, he had exposed himself to the enmity of his former friends. If however in supporting the Bianchi he supported the Ghibelines—to

* Inf. vi 69.

brand him as a violent and revengeful partisan is the greatest of calumnies. With the strictest impartiality, as he passes through the several circles of Hell, he assigns to each individual his deserved station, without respect to party; and even treats Pope Boniface, his bitterest foe, in his spiritual capacity, with extreme respect.* If, on the one hand, he condemns his elevation to the Popedom by simony, so far as to call him an "Usurper," and to declare that in the eyes of the Almighty, the Papal chair was actually "vacant"† —on the other, he rebukes, in the strongest terms, Philip le Bel for indignities offered to Boniface; and he even avows that in the person of his Vicar, our Saviour had been crucified a second time.‡ Such a confession, on behalf of one who caused his exile, savours little of that spleen and indulgence of personal feeling which have been attributed to Dante. His indignation against Boniface, as the scandal of Christendom, and the destroyer of the liberties of his country, he pours forth without measure. But this he does, not as the disappointed member of a faction, but as a sincere Christian, and ardent patriot. Guelfs and Ghibelines he condemns alike—the former for opposing the Emperors, whom he supported as heirs of the Cæsars—the latter, for siding with the Emperors, merely to promote their party interests, and without caring for the "sacred standard," round which he fain would have rallied the whole nation.§ As for the Ghibelines, he scruples not to declare his utter contempt for them in that well known passage, where describing the miseries of his exile, he denounces them as the "foul and senseless company," with whom he was for awhile condemned to associate.||

And he proceeds to tell us that he gloried in being a party by himself,¶ *i. e.* that he was neither a Guelf nor a Ghibeline, but a true Italian, anxious to reconcile the contending factions, and to hoist the national standard, for the purpose of uniting the various States of Italy under one Monarch, and thus defeating the selfish intrigues of the Pope, whose policy it was to acquire power by the dissensions he created.

Quitting his unworthy associates, after a vain attempt to re-enter Florence by force of arms, Dante had recourse to

* Purg. xx. 88. † Par. xxvii. 23. ‡ Purg. xx. 88.
§ Par. vi. 31—35, and 97—109. || Par. xvii. 55.
¶ "Si ch'a te fia bello averti fatta parte per te stesso."—Par. xvii. 68.

his pen, and he conceived the idea of a poem, which representing this world under an allegory of the next, should enable him to unfold the manifold corruptions of the age in which he lived. And he has executed his design with wonderful boldness and impartiality,—looking forward, as he says, to posterity for the reward of his exertions in the cause of truth.*

To that love of justice which prompted him to punish the heads of both factions—to that unbending spirit which would not permit him to become subservient to the traitorous designs of his friends, Dante owed his misfortunes. But he acted on no short-sighted views of political expediency. He felt not bound to follow a faction against the dictates of his conscience. He cast off the shackles of party, and declared himself an independent man. And, although it has been his fate to be maligned while he lived, and to be misrepresented after death by those who envied his adamantine firmness, or who could not appreciate his motives, yet will a late posterity reverse the sentence of interested or ignorant biographers, and hail the man who amid all the disasters of his unfortunate life, never stooped his head to meanness, or suffered himself to be diverted from his noble undertaking.†

His sufferings and feelings during banishment are best described by himself, in that affecting passage of his Convito, where he exclaims:

"Ah! would it had pleased the Dispenser of all things—that neither others had done me wrong, nor myself undergone penalty undeservedly—the penalty I say, of exile and of poverty. For it pleased the citizens of the fairest and most renowned daughter of Rome—Florence—to cast me out of her most sweet bosom, where I was born and bred, and passed the half of my life, and in which, with her good leave, I still desire with all my heart to repose my weary spirit, and finish the days allotted me. And so I have wandered in almost every place to which our language extends, a stranger, almost a beggar, exposing against my will the wounds inflicted on me by fortune, too often unjustly imputed to the sufferer's fault. Truly I have been a vessel without sail and without rudder, driven about upon different ports and shores by the dry wind breathed forth by dolorous

* Par. xvii. 11 † Purg. v. 14.

poverty: and I have appeared vile in the eyes of many, who, perhaps, by some better report, had conceived of me a different impression, and in whose sight not only has my person been thus debased, but a less value attached to every work I had completed, as well as to those I contemplated."* After long enduring the miseries of banishment, and making vain appeals to his countrymen to be allowed to return, the intercession of his friends was acceded to, on condition that he should pay a fine, confess the justice of his sentence, and make an apology to the state. The indignation with which Dante spurned the offer is exhibited in the following letter to a friend.

"After enduring the sufferings of exile for nearly fifteen years, can such a recall be a glorious one to Dante Alighieri? Is this the reward of an innocence universally acknowledged —of the labour and fatigues of unremitting study? Far from a man conversant with Philosophy be the senseless pusillanimity that would bespeak such baseness of heart, and induce him to offer himself up in chains, and follow others into the path of infamy. Far be it from a man demanding justice, to compromise injustice with money, and treat his persecutors as if they were his benefactors. No, my father, this is not the way of returning to my country. If, however, any other offer shall be made now, or at a future time, that shall not detract from the honour and reputation of Dante, that offer I will accept with no tardy steps. But if by no such way can Florence be entered, Florence I will never enter. What! Can I not every where enjoy the sight of the sun and the stars? Can I not, under every part of heaven, meditate upon the most delightful truths, without first rendering myself inglorious, nay, infamous to the people and republic of Florence? Bread, at least, will not fail me."

The hope he here expresses was not destined to be realized. He never again returned to his beloved Florence, or enjoyed the comforts of domestic life. His last refuge was at Ravenna, in the palace of Guido da Polenta, a Guelf, to whom he felt so much indebted, that having been sent ambassador to Venice by his protector, and failing in the object of his mission, he died on his return, from fatigue and disappointment, in the fifty-seventh year of his age, A.D. 1321. And at

* Convito Trat. i. cap. 3.

Ravenna his ashes rest, notwithstanding the tardy endeavours of "ungrateful Florence" to recover them.

The incidents of Dante's life are involved in much obscurity; nor has it been attempted to trace his wanderings during twenty years of banishment. His history is in fact the history of his mind—that mind which feeding upon high and heavenly thoughts, yet anxious to promote his grand scheme of uniting Italy under one Monarch, and Christians under one Shepherd, was ever and anon descending from above to mingle its ardent and benign affections in the things of earth;—that mind which neither relenting in its enmity to the "Wolves" that desolated his beloved country, nor abandoning the hope of returning with the laurels of a Poet to the "fair fold" where he had his birth, was bent through many a painful year on the completion of his "Sacred Poem."*

In that poem indeed must the life of Dante be studied. And though his other works, both in prose and verse, are sufficiently important of themselves to have raised him to a high place as a Poet and a Philosopher, still the Divina Comedia is the imperishable crown of his labours—the offering of his heart as an admirer of Nature, and a devout worshipper of God.

* Par. xxv. 1.

INTRODUCTION TO THE INFERNO.

To enable us to understand the design of Dante's Poem, it may be useful to take a short review of the time in which he wrote.

In the beginning of the fourteenth century, Italy presents a lamentable picture of darkness and misery. At that unhappy period, the pure religion of the primitive Christians had been wholly corrupted by the innovations of the Court of Rome. Over all affairs, both ecclesiastical and political, she exercised a withering and debasing influence. The faculties were enchained—the feelings deadened, by the inventions of priestcraft; and crime encouraged by the sale of Indulgences. Hence resulted a state of morals more gross than can well be conceived;—and so venalized was the Church as to create a belief in the mind of Dante that the usurped temporal power of Papal Rome was indeed the Antichrist foretold in the Revelations.*

The evils thus arising from religious abuses were aggravated by the violence of party spirit. Guelfs and Ghibelines—partisans of the Pope or of the Emperor—carried on a constant and deadly warfare throughout the numerous states into which Italy was divided. The Guelfs had blindly rendered themselves the instruments of the Church; and while fighting, as they imagined, in defence of their liberties, were unconsciously forging for themselves the fetters of a degrading tyranny. Too weak to unite Italy under one government; and at the same time, too powerful to submit to the Emperors of Germany, the Court of Rome preserved her political ascendancy by fomenting the antipathies of the two factions. Whenever her cause appeared declining, foreigners were called in to its support. Hence Italy was deluged with blood, and her welfare sacrificed to ambition and avarice.

With this picture before our eyes let us imagine Dante—a being of transcendant genius and profound learning, imbued with strong religious and patriotic feelings, roused as it were from sleep, in the full maturity of his intellect, to the contemplation of this sad reality. Let us imagine him in the situation he describes—thrown amid a vicious generation, so corrupted by evil example, and hardened in iniquity, that he might justly describe himself as wandering in a rank and savage wilderness.

> "Like one lost in a thorny wood,
> That rends the thorns, and is rent with the thorns;
> Seeking a way, and straying from the way,
> Not knowing how to find the open air,
> But toiling desperately to find it out."†

In this vale of misery all traces of the straight path were wholly obliterated; and even the upright and virtuous Dante found great difficulty in extricating himself from the mazes of error. How he first became entangled he was unable, he says, to discover,—so immersed was he in sleep at the time he abandoned the true path; or, as he intimates in the fifteenth canto, so young as to be incapable of

* Inf. xix. 106. † Shakespeare, Henry VI. 3rd pt. act iii. sc. 2

exercising a sound discretion. The recollection of the past came over his soul like the bitterness of death; when, awakened to a conviction of the truth, he contemplated the dangers he had escaped.* But with these personal feelings were blended others of a far more comprehensive character; and, in the miseries of his native land, Dante felt all the sympathy which the most devoted patriotism could inspire.

On arriving at the termination of the valley in which he had been wandering, he looks upward, and beholds a Mountain illumined with the beams of the Sun of Righteousness. His eyes are directed with joy to this beautiful abode of virtue, upon which Revelation sheds its unerring ray. To impart to others that light which was graciously vouchsafed to himself is the object of his earnest desire. Animated by the prospect, he proceeds on his journey with sanguine hopes of rescuing Italy from misery, and bringing peace and liberty to his distracted country.

Scarcely has he begun to ascend the mountain, when he is successively opposed by three wild beasts - a Panther, a Lion, and a she-Wolf. The restlessness of the Panther, its varied colours, and cruel disposition, afford a lively representation of Florence divided into the implacable factions of the Neri and Bianchi, and continually fluctuating at the caprice of a changeable and headstrong populace. The continued vexation experienced from this animal impedes the progress of Dante, and frequently inclines him to retreat. Various circumstances, however, combine to encourage him;—the beautiful season of spring—the religious consolation of Easter—the commencement of a new century (1300), ushered in by a solemn Jubilee, and a change in the state of parties at Florence, described by the grey skin of the Panther, present to him the brightest omens of success. But these hopes are soon dissipated by the appearance of the Lion,—emblematical of France, and his ambitious interference in the government of Florence. The poet is at the same time attacked by the she-Wolf, intended to represent the avaricious Court of Rome. These two powers uniting to oppose the virtuous endeavours of Dante, he despairs of reaching the summit of the beautiful mountain. He sees his miserable country, for which he possessed the most ardent love, become a prey to the ambition of foreign potentates, and exposed to all the calamities of tyranny and misgovernment.

From the union of temporal with spiritual power in the person of the Pope, their manifold evils derived their source.† Hence, to confine the authority of the See of Rome to religious affairs, and to re-establish in Italy the imperial authority, were two of the great objects Dante had in view. As heirs of the Cæsars, the Emperors were considered by Dante the lawful monarchs of Italy; and to the revival of their dominion he looked forward with anxious expectation.

Disappointed in the hope of executing his benevolent projects, Dante is driven back into the dark valley, where the voice of reason is mute; when the shade of Virgil appears before his eyes, and re-

* Inf. i. 25. † Purg. vi. 103, xvi. 110, 127.
Par. xxvii. 145. xxx. 137. and the De Monarchiâ passim.

commends him to climb the mountain by some other road—declaring it fruitless to attempt a passage in opposition to the Wolf, "whose greediness will permit none to tread the same path with herself, but will assuredly effect their destruction." For the present, he says, Italy is doomed to submit to her control, and to suffer from the intrigues of the Court of Rome from the kings of the earth, till the arrival of a prophetic conqueror, described under the image of a Greyhound, who is destined to chase the Wolf back into her native hell.*

In the meantime Dante is to awaken the Italians to a sense of their condition, and to prepare them for a return to the primitive simplicity of the Christian Church. Nor are the means his genius suggests unworthy of so noble an undertaking. A poem is to be constructed of a peculiar kind, which shall contain the most convincing evidence, blended with beauties so inimitable as to ensure its never-failing reception in the hearts of men throughout all ages. To enable him to execute his arduous design, Virgil offers to become his guide, and to lead him through Hell and Purgatory;—that thus visiting, as it were, in turn every description of sinner, he might be enabled to make a lasting record of what he had seen, and reveal to mankind the cause of those iniquities which had covered the land with the darkness of the shadow of death. Should he wish, says Virgil, after reviewing the punishments assigned to the wicked, to behold the blessed abode of the saints in Paradise, and stimulate his country to virtue by a description of heavenly bliss—"a soul more worthy shall conduct his flight."

In contemplating at first the mighty work, the poet feels a distrust of his ability to perform it, and expresses doubt as to his fitness for so arduous an undertaking. Virgil, however, comes to his assistance, and gives an account of his mission. Divine Mercy, having commiserated Dante's unhappy state, had been the first, he declares, to prevail upon Justice to temper his strict decrees.† Lucia or Grace descends accordingly, and entreats Beatrice, or heavenly Wisdom, to exert herself in behalf of one of her most devoted friends, engaged in mortal combat with sin and death on the tempestuous sea of wickedness.‡ Beatrice swiftly leaves her blest abode, and coming to Virgil, with earnest entreaty implores his aid to rescue her friend from the perils by which he is surrounded.

Encouraged by the assurance of heavenly support, the ardour of Dante is revived, he expresses his eagerness to pursue the new path recommended by Virgil, and acknowledges him as his guide and master. He desists from any open contention with the Court of Rome; and summons all the energies of his mind in the execution of his "Sacred Poem."§ Calling up from their graves those Pontiffs who had chiefly been instrumental in corrupting the Church by their lust of power and wealth, he gives to the world a retrospective view of their lives, and fearlessly exposes the depravity which had brought such manifold evils on the world.

By contemplating the effects of sin—by reflecting on the various

* Inf. i. 100, & note. † Inf. ii. 94. ‡ Ib. 107. § Par. xxv. 1.

and terrible punishments it incurs, the mind is to be impressed in the first place with an awful sense of Divine Justice; and with this object we are conducted to the gate of Hell.

ALLEGORY OF THE FIRST CANTO.

A KEY TO THE POEM.

DANTE . . .	A Pilgrim journeying through the several stages of human existence, and at last vouchsafed a glimpse of the Saviour.
THE DARK WOOD, (line 2) .	The wood of ignorance and error, situated in the "Vale of Woe,"—the Hell of this world.
THE MOUNTAIN, (line 13) .	The Hill of Virtue; its rugged sides the scenes of the struggles of the penitent —the Purgatory of this world: its radiant summit the abode of the virtuous—the terrestrial Paradise.
THE PANTHER, (line 42) .	Florence; Envy.
THE LION, (line 45) .	France; Ambition.
THE SHE WOLF, (line 48) .	The Court of Rome; Avarice.
THE GREYHOUND, (line 101)	Our Saviour, or an Emperor, his Vice gerent. (See Note to Inf. i. 101.)
VIRGIL, (line 73) . .	Human Wisdom.
BEATRICE, (line 122) .	Heavenly Wisdom.

FORM OF THE INFERNO.

THE reader must imagine a vast concavity or pit, reaching from the surface of the earth down to the centre, and divided into nine circles gradually diminishing in circumference. An inverted cone would represent the exterior figure; an amphitheatre would afford some idea of the interior.

Within the Gate of Hell, but before the commencement of the circles, is a dark valley running around the mouth of the infernal pit. This is the outskirt of Hell, styled Limbo, and is the receptacle of neutrals and worthless wretches rejected alike of Heaven and Hell.

The nine circles are severally appropriated to the punishment of crimes of a particular genus; and some of these are subdivided according to the different species of offences which that genus comprises.

Each circle is under the guardianship of a Demon, who is the emblem of the vice therein punished. Those who have given way to their passions are appositely whirled by the force of a violent wind, (Semiramis, Helen, Paris, &c. Canto v.) Those who, set in high places, should have raised their thoughts to heaven, instead of grovelling below, are turned topsy-turvy, their heads downwards. (Pope Nicholas, Boniface, &c. Canto xix.)

In proportion to the magnitude of crime the lower is the circle allotted. Thus is contrived a graduated scale of punishment, the circles becoming more and more contracted in their circumference, as also sinking to a lower depth. At the very lowest point, or centre of the earth, the archtraitor Lucifer is fixed. Dante having passed this central point, proceeds on to the antipodes, where he places his mountain of Purgatory.

INFERNO.

CANTO I.

ARGUMENT.

DANTE, attempting to escape from the valley of sin, and to ascend the hill of virtue, is driven back by three wild beasts. The poet Virgil comes to his assistance.

IN the mid-journey of our life below, 1
I found myself within a gloomy wood,—
No traces left, the path direct to show.
Ah! what a painful task to tell how drear,
How savage, and how rank that forest stood,
Which e'en to think upon renews my fear!
More bitter scarcely death itself can be. 7
But to disclose the good which there I found,
I will relate what else 'twas mine to see.
How first I entered, it is hard to say;
In such deep slumber were my senses bound,
When from the path of truth I went astray.
But soon as I had reached a Mountain's base, 13
(Where the low vale that struck me with dismay
Obtains a limit to its dreadful space)
I looked on high, and saw its shoulders bright
Already with that glorious planet's ray
Which guideth man through every path aright.

1. At the age of 35, A.D. 1300, "The days of our age are threescore years and ten." Psalm xc. 10. Throughout his works Dante compares life to a journey, and exhorts men, "in order to travel with safety, to obtain the light of that wisdom which visited us in our likeness." Dante, Convito Trat. iii. 5. 2. The dark wood represents ignorance and error—"the erroneous wood of this life." Dante, Convito Trat. iv. 24. 3. "Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in the right way." Psalm xxvii. 13. 11. Sleep in the Scriptural sense, "Awake thou that sleepest," &c. Eph. v. 14. 13. The hill of Virtue. 14. The vale of Woe—"the dolorous valley of the abyss." Canto. iv. 8. 16. The summit of the "Delectable Mountain" is clothed with the beams of the sun—"the Sun of Righteousness which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." St. John i. 9. Upon the top of the mountain is situated the terrestrial Paradise. Purg. xxviii. The sun is called a planet —being so considered in Dante's time.

Then was awhile allayed the chilling fear 19
That in my heart's deep lake had trembling stood,
The night I passed in anguish so severe:
And like to one all breathless—who at last
Escaped ashore from out the perilous flood,
Turns to the wave, and gazing, stands aghast;
E'en so my mind, though yet intent on flight, 25
Turned backward to review that vale of gloom
Which never spared the life of mortal wight.
Soon as my weary frame had rest obtained,
Up the lone steep my journey I resume;
But firmer still the lowest foot remained.
To climb the ascent I scarcely had essayed, 31
When lo! an agile Panther barred my way,
Exceeding swift, in spotted coat arrayed.
Confronting me, she plied her nimble feet,
And in my progress caused me such delay,
That oft I turned with purpose to retreat.
It was the hour when morning dawns on high; 37
And now the sun was rising in the east,
With those fair stars that bore him company
When Love Divine first launched them in the sky:
These happy omens now my hope increased—
The Panther's coat that shone with brilliant dye—
The season sweet, and early morning bright: 43
Not that without dismay I saw appear
A Lion's form that burst upon my sight.

27. Certain death awaits those who remain in the vale of Woe. 32. The Panther or Leopard represents Envy, personified by the gay, changeable and factious city of Florence. 40. The world was anciently believed to have been created in the Spring. "Ver illud erat." Georg. ii. 336. The sun was in Aries—the season, spring—the time, morning—the day, Good Friday—and the state of parties at Florence, as represented by the Panther, favourable:—all these happy omens however are dissipated by the appearance of the Lion and the She-Wolf. The allegory of the three beasts is taken from Scripture, "A Lion out of the forest shall slay them; and a Wolf of the evenings shall spoil them; and a Leopard shall watch over their cities." Jeremiah v. 6. 42. An allusion to the factions of the Neri and Bianchi into which Florence was divided. 45. The Lion represents the ambitious power of France, personified in Philip le Bel—a haughty and bloody tyrant, who, intriguing with Pope Boniface VIII. aimed at securing to France the govern-

With ravening hunger, and uplifted head,
He came against me in his fell career;—
Methought the very air partook of dread:
A She-Wolf too; who ravenous and lean
Seemed by innumerable wants possessed,
And had of multitudes the ruin been.
With terror were her glaring eyeballs fired;
And thence my soul was by such weight oppressed,
All hope I lost to win that mount desired.
And e'en as one intent to swell his stores,
When comes the hour that sweepeth them away,
Gives up his thoughts to grief, and still deplores;
Such I became, as that insatiate brute
Approaching nearer filled me with dismay,
And drove me back to where the sun is mute.
While sadly I retraced my former course
Down to the vale,—before me I descried
One, who by long disuse of speech was hoarse.
Him when I saw on that wide desert coast,—
"Have pity, whatsoe'er thou be," I cried—
"Or living man, or melancholy ghost."

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ment of Italy, hitherto enjoyed by the Cæsars and their heirs, the Emperors of Germany. See Purg. xxxii. 152, and note. 49. Avarice,—personified in the Court of Rome, and particularly in Pope Boniface VIII. who even Villani says, "had no scruples of conscience in the acquisition of wealth," and intrigued with Philip le Bel to plunder and enslave Florence. "The symbol of the she-wolf, understood to mean the meretricious venal Church, is carried on with consistency throughout the poem. . . This interpretation, true, and novel in our days was concealed rather than unknown by the first commentators." Ugo Foscolo. Discorso. (See Inf. ii. 119. vi. 7. xix. 106. Purg. xx. 10. xxxii. 148, &c. Par. ix. 132. xxvii. 55.) 60. A bold metaphor from Scripture: "Non des requiem tibi, neque taceat pupilla oculi tui." Lament. Jer. ii. 18. Vulgate. Whence Milton: "The sun to me is dark and silent as the moon." (Samson. Agon.) See also Inf. v. 28. 63. Virgil—whose poem had been neglected during the dark ages. He is the type of Human Wisdom, or Reason, unaided by Revelation—the link between the old world and the new—between Pagan and Christian Rome, and supposed by many of the Fathers to have prophesied the coming of our Saviour: "Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo," &c. Eclog. iv. 7.—a passage which Dante supposes to have converted Statius to Christianity. See Purg. xxii. 70, 73. He will guide Dante through Hell and Purgatory, as a teacher of Morality, but make way for Beatrice to guide him into Heaven.

"Not man," he answered, "though I once was man ; 67
My parents were of Lombardy ; and they
In Mantua both their mortal journey ran.
Late in great Julius' reign I had my birth,
And lived at Rome 'neath good Augustus' sway,
When false and lying gods prevailed on earth.
A bard I was ; and sang that just one's fame— 73
Anchises' son,—who left the Trojan shore,
When fell proud Ilion, wrapt in hostile flame.
But why returnest thou to such annoy ?
Why dost thou climb yon pleasant mount no more—
The origin and cause of every joy ?"
With looks abashed I answered, bending low: 79
"Art thou that Virgil then—that fountain clear,
Whence streams of eloquence so richly flow ?
O thou, of bards the honour and the light,
Let my long study of thy volume dear,
And mighty love gain favour in thy sight.
My master thou—my author most admired 85
To thee alone that beauteous style I owe,
Which for my name such honour hath acquired.
Behold the beast which caused me to retreat !
Protection from her wrath, great sage, bestow ;
Through fear of her my veins and pulses beat."
"Thee it behoves another path to take," 91
He answered, (seeing how my sorrow flowed,)
"If thou this savage desert would'st forsake ;
For yonder beast which fills thee with dismay
Doth none permit to journey o'er her road,
But hinders sore, till she destroy her prey.
So vile her nature—so disposed to ill, 97
Her ravenous wants she ne'er can satisfy ;
And food but serves to whet her hunger still.
She links herself to many an animal ;

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70. **Virgil was born "late" compared with Julius Cæsar, *i. e.* 28 years after his birth.** 73. Æneas—"quo justior alter nec pietate fuit." Æn. 1. 544. 85. *i. e.* "My authority." See Convito Trat. iv. c. 6. **91. *i. e.* Any direct opposition to the Wolf will be fruitless. A poem must be written which shall shew the true cause of the manifold evils of the world. 100. *i. e.* To many kings ;—alluding to the intrigues of the Court of Rome. She is styled "the beast" (line 94) ; so, her**

And till the Greyhound come, to make her die
A painful death, yet more will she enthral.
(Him neither land nor lucre shall sustain, 103
By love, by wisdom, and by virtue fed:
From Feltro e'en to Feltro shall he reign.
His might Italia's lowly plains shall save,
For which Euryalus and Nisus bled,
Turnus the king, Camilla, virgin brave.)
Back to the limits of her native hell, 109
Whence Envy drew her first—with potent sway
From town to town shall he the beast repel.
Now, pondering on thy welfare, I decide
Through an eternal realm to lead the way;
If thou wilt follow, I will be thy guide.
There shalt thou hear the cries of hopeless woe; 115
There see the mournful shades of olden time
Imploring death to strike the second blow:
Others, in fire contented to remain;
For hope is their's, in heaven's untroubled clime,
Some future day an honoured seat to gain.
But would'st thou mount to where the blessed dwell, 121
A soul more worthy shall conduct thy flight;

paramours are here called "animals," and declared to be "many." See Canto xix. 106, where she is identified by Dante with "her that sitteth on the waters," and Rome with Babylon. Rev. xvii. 2, 5. 101. The prophetic Greyhound may be known by his qualities and office. He is "nourished by Love, Wisdom and Virtue" (line 104)—is appointed "to destroy the She-wolf" (line 101) and be the saviour of Italy (line 106). In his *De Monarchiâ*, speaking parenthetically of the rapacious pastors, Dante observes: "But it is better to pursue our subject, and in pious silence await the coming of our Saviour." Page 116, Fraticelli's Edit. This interpretation is borne out by the parallel passages of the Purgatorio, where it is declared that "la fuia, and the giant, her partner in crime" (evidently the She-Wolf and Lion of this Canto) "shall be destroyed by one sent from heaven." Purg. xxxiii. 43. This Greyhound is commonly understood of Can Grande, Henry of Luxemburg (see note to Par. xxx. 136), or Uguccione della Faggiola. 105. From Feltro in the Marca Travigiana to Montefeltro in Romagna. 109. "Through envy of the Devil death came into the world." Wisdom ii. 24. This Antichristian character of "the Beast," as having been nurtured in hell, and sent to earth through Satan's envy of our first parents, is more fully expressed in canto xix. 106. 116. The spirits in Hell. (The "second blow" is the death of the soul as well as of the body.) 118. The spirits in Purgatory. 121. The spirits in Paradise. 122. Beatrice, or

Her care shall guide thee when I bid farewell;
For that great Emperor who rules above
Grants not that I, a rebel in his sight,
Lead to his City those He may approve.
Lord of the universe—his seat is there;
There his divine abode, and lofty throne:
O happy he who doth his favour share!"
"Poet, I do conjure thee," I replied,
"By that dread God whom thou hast never known,
(So may I shun this ill and worse beside)
Lead me, O lead me thither, where the gate
Of holy Peter may by me be viewed,
And those thou speak'st of in such mournful state."
He then led on; and I his steps pursued.

CANTO II.

ARGUMENT.

Dante is disheartened when he reflects on his arduous enterprise—a descent into Hell, accomplished only by such men as Æneas and St. Paul. Virgil relieves his fears, and relates how he had been sent to his assistance by Beatrice. He accompanies Dante to the gate of Hell.

The day was closing, and the dusky air
On all the creatures of the earth bestowed
Rest from their labours:—I alone prepare
To war with pity, and in strenuous fight
Contend against the horrors of the road,
Which an unerring memory shall recite.
O Muse, O lofty Genius, grant your aid:—

Heavenly Wisdom. See note to Memoir, and to canto ii. 55. Beatrice succeeds Virgil to guide Dante into Paradise. 124. Mark the contrast. God, "L'Imperador che lassù regna," in opposition to Satan, "L'Imperador del doloroso regno." Inf. Canto xxxiv. 28. 125. Dante makes Virgil say of himself, that he had lost heaven from "want of faith" (Purg. vii. 7); *i. e.* that though he foresaw the coming Saviour (see note, line 63), he had not placed his trust in Him. 126. The heavenly Jerusalem. 127. "The Lord hath prepared his seat in heaven; and his kingdom ruleth over all." Psalm ciii. 19. 129. Literally, "Blessed is he whom He hath chosen to reside there," *i. e.* to be a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem. 133. The gate of Purgatory. See Purg. xxi. 54.

5. In preparing to go down into hell, Dante had a struggle to maintain against his own nature, which inclined him to pity those whom Divine Justice had condemned.

O Memory—faithful record of the past—
Be here thy true nobility displayed.
"Poet," I then began, "my honoured guide,
O trust me not in an attempt so vast,
Until my strength and virtue have been tried.
Thy verse relates how Sylvius' parent gained 13
Immortal realms, while yet corruptible,
And still in bonds of human flesh detained.
If then the great Antagonist of ill
So honoured him, whoso considers well,
The mighty destinies he should fulfil,
Will that especial favour justly rate 19
Not unbecoming one ordained to be
Father of Rome, and her imperial state;—
There, where the holy place, if truth be told,
Was instituted by divine decree
As the high seat St. Peter's heir should hold.
In that descent, made famous by thy rhyme, 25
He heard the announcement of his victory,
And of the Papal See in coming time.
Next went the 'chosen vessel' to convey
Comfort to those, who on that Faith rely
Which to salvation opens first the way.
But I—why go I there? who sanction gives? 31
Æneas am not I, nor righteous Paul:
That I am worthy, surely none believes.
If then I venture on this enterprise,
Great is my dread in the attempt to fall:
More need I not to say, for thou art wise."
And like to one who swerves from his intent, 37
Changing his purpose as fresh thoughts succeed,
Till his original design is spent;
Such I became on that benighted coast;
So that my enterprise, commenced with speed,
Amid a crowd of idle thoughts was lost.

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13. Sylvius is another name for Æneas (Æn. vi. 768); whose father, Anchises, descended to the shades below, as described by Virgil. 26. The victory of Æneas over Turnus, which led to the establishment of the Roman Empire, and of the Papal See. Æneas and St. Peter are here prominently brought forward, as the supposed originators of the two great principles Dante advocated—a universal empire and a universal religion. See "The Spirit of Dante," prefixed. 28. St. Paul. Acts ix. 15.

" If rightly I thy meaning understand," 43
The poet of exalted soul replied,
" By coward fear thy spirit is unmanned,—
Fear—that oft-times doth so weigh down the heart,
It makes man turn from nobler deeds aside,
Like beasts that at some fancied object start.
From this alarm that thou may'st be relieved, 49
The reason of my coming I declare,
And what I heard when first for thee I grieved.—
'Mid those in Limbo was I dwelling still,
When I was called by one so blest and fair,
That I entreated her to speak her will.
Her eyes shone brighter than the star on high; 55
And on mine ear in her own accents fell
Tones soft and sweet of angel harmony:
' O Mantuan poet! kind and courteous soul!
Whose honoured memory yet on earth doth dwell,
And shall endure till ages cease to roll;—
A friend I have (by cruel fortune spurned) 61
So hindered, journeying up the lone ascent,
That in despair his footsteps he hath turned;
And so bewildered is he, that I fear
My tardy succour will in vain be lent,—
If I may judge from what in heaven I hear.
Now rise—and with thy polished words unfold 67
All that to rescue him may needful be,
And aid him so, that I may be consoled.
Know—I am Beatrice who bid thee go;
The place I left I long again to see:
Love brought me here, Love makes these words to flow.
Oft-times, when in the presence of my Lord, 73
My voice shall rise to celebrate thy praise.'
Then I resumed, as ceased the angelic word:
' O virtuous Lady, whose excelling worth
Alone hath influence mortal man to raise
O'er all the creatures that inhabit earth,—

52. Literally, " Among those who are suspended," *i. e.* in a place of neither pleasure nor pain. This Limbo is described in canto iv. Virgil was summoned thence by Beatrice. See canto i. 122. 72. Heavenly Wisdom is incited by Charity to the rescue of Dante. 78. Literally, " Contained within the heaven which has the smallest circles," *i. e.* within

Such my delight thy mandate to fulfil, 79
That were it done, there still would seem delay;
Seek then no further to disclose thy will:
But tell the cause—why, fearless and unmoved,
To this low centre thou hast won thy way
From those high realms by thee so well beloved.'
'Since of my nature thou so much would'st know, 85
To thee I briefly will reveal,' she said,
'Why undismay'd I venture here below.—
Those things alone should we regard with fear,
Which bring misfortune on another's head;
All else are harmless, nor deserve our care.
Such – thanks to God, by Him have I been made, 91
That your calamities assail me not,
Nor do these flaming realms my peace invade.
In heaven there dwells a generous Maid, who sees
With such concern this wanderer's hapless lot,
That Justice yields to her its stern decrees.
She called on Lucia in her prayer: 'Thy friend— 97
Thy faithful friend, of thee now stands in need;
Him to thy grateful care do I commend.'
Lucia, to deeds of mercy ever given,
Rose at her gentle words, and came with speed
Where I with ancient Rachel sate in heaven.
'O Beatrice! she said, 'true praise of God! 103
Wherefore not succour him who loved thee so,
That for thy sake he fled the vulgar crowd?
Dost thou not hear his piteous cry—nor see
The death he combats on the flood below,
Which not by ocean's rage surpassed can be?'
Not with such haste on earth do men arise 109
To shun misfortune, or to compass gains,
As I, acquainted with his miseries,
Descended from the blest angelic choir,
Confiding in thy sweet persuasive strains,
Which honour thee, and all who thee admire.'

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the Moon. See "Material Heavens," prefixed to the Paradiso. 84. The empyreal Heaven—in which Beatrice was enjoying the vision of God. 94. Divine Mercy. 97. Illuminating grace,—personified in St. Lucia the Martyr. (See Purg. ix. 55. Par. xxxii. 137.) She, having been herself prevailed upon by Mercy, interceded with Wisdom. 102. Heavenly contemplation. (See Purg. xxvii. 104; also Convito, Trat. iv. 22.)

This said—her eyes, all glistening in her tears,
Beauteous—she turned; whereat my zeal increased
To speed me hither, and relieve thy fears.
Thus, at her wish I hastened to thine aid,
And snatched thee from the fury of the beast,
Which up the mount thy shorter road forbade.
Then wherefore linger? wherefore this delay?
Why harbour in thy breast this coward fear?
Why o'er thy soul hath courage lost its sway,
Since three blest damsels in the court of heaven
Watch o'er thy safety with such tender care,
And in my words such promised help is given?"
As flow'rets, bent and closed by chilling night,
Soon as the sun his radiance hath bestowed,
Rise on their stems, and opening hail the light;
Thus to my wearied breast fresh vigour ran;
And o'er my heart such goodly courage flowed,
Like one restored to freedom, I began.
"O how compassionate the heavenly Maid
Who lent me succour! and thyself how kind,
Who hast so soon her words of truth obeyed!
Such strong desire my journey to pursue
Thy cheering speech hath kindled in my mind,
That I with joy my first design renew.
Lead on;—one impulse doth our bosoms sway;
Thou art my guide—my master—and my lord."
I spake;—and soon as he resumed the way,
That deep and savage pathway I explored.

CANTO III.

ARGUMENT.

Inscription over the gate of Hell. Dante enters, and in the outskirts, called Limbo, sees spirits, who, having lived in a state of indifference

116. Heavenly Wisdom weeps at the infirmity of human nature. 119. The She-wolf. See canto i. 49. 124. Mercy, Grace, and Wisdom, as mentioned above. 136. Dante is confirmed in the design of executing his mission in spite of the Court of Rome and all earthly opposition. He accordingly proceeds towards the gate of Hell. 139. Human Will submits to Human Wisdom. When the human will shall have submitted to a higher instructor the full object of the Pilgrim will be accomplished; and his will identified with the will of God. Par. xxxiii. 143.

both to good and evil, are assigned the same portion as the neutral angels. They are ferried over the river Acheron—A blast of lightning stuns Dante, and he falls into a swoon.

"Through me ye enter the abode of woe: 1
Through me to endless sorrow are ye brought:
Through me amid the souls accurst ye go.
Justice did first my lofty Maker move;
By Power Almighty was my fabric wrought,
By highest Wisdom, and by Primal Love.
Ere I was form'd, no things created were, 7
Save those eternal—I eternal last:
All hope abandon—ye who enter here."
These words, inscribed in colour dark, I saw
High on the summit of a portal vast;
Whereat I cried: "O master! with deep awe
Their sense I mark." Like one prepared, he said, 13
"Here from thy soul must doubt be cast away,
Here must each thought of cowardice be dead.—
Now, at that place whereof I spake, arrived,
The melancholy shades shalt thou survey,
Of God—the mind's supremest good—deprived."
Then, as he clasped my hand with cheerful mien, 19
That comfort gave, and bade me cease to fear,
He led me down into the world unseen.
There sobs and wailings, and heart-rending cries
Resounded through the starless atmosphere;
Whence tears began to gather in mine eyes.
Harsh tongues discordant—horrible discourse— 25
Words of despair—fierce accents of despite—
Striking of hands—with curses deep and hoarse
Raised a loud tumult, that unceasing whirled
Throughout that gloom of everlasting night,
Like to the sand in circling eddies hurled.

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1. This inscription is supposed to be written over the gate of hell. 4, &c. The attributes of the Trinity are here described,—the Power of the Father—the Wisdom of the Son—the Love of the Holy Ghost.—These Three Persons are moved by "Justice" to construct Hell. 8. *i.e.* The rebellious angels who were driven down into Hell, before the creation of man. 15. Dante has before declared the necessity of steeling his heart to pity. Canto ii. 4. 24. Dante breaks the rule laid down for himself. He weeps at first sight of the sufferings of the wicked.

Then (horror compassing my head around) 31
I cried: "O master, what is this I hear?
And who are these so plunged in grief profound?"
He answered me: "The groans which thou hast heard,
Proceed from those, who, when on earth they were,
Nor praise deserved, nor infamy incurred.
Here with those caitiff angels they abide, 37*
Who stood aloof in heaven—to God untrue,
Yet wanting courage with his foes to side.
Heaven drove them forth, its beauty not to stain;
And Hell refuses to receive them too.—
From them no glory could the damned obtain."
"O master, what infliction do they bear," 43
I said, "which makes them raise such shrieks of woe?"
He answered: "That I will in brief declare.
No hope of death have this unhappy crew;
And their degraded life is sunk so low,
With envy every other state they view.
Fame is on earth denied this wretched class, 49
Alike by Justice and by Pity spurned:
Speak we no more of them—but look—and pass."
I looked beyond,—and lo! a banner rose,
That, whirling round and round, so swiftly turned,
Its rapid motion seemed to scorn repose.
So large a troop of spirits came behind, 55
I ne'er forsooth could have believed it true,
That Death had slain such myriads of mankind.
And when I had examined many a shade,
Behold! that abject one appeared in view,

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31. The reading of "orror" instead of "error" is found in various MSS. and also in several editions. That of the Editio princeps in the British Museum has been altered in writing into "error." "Orror" is adopted by Boccaccio in his Comment, and by Panizzi in his edition of Bojardo. Rogers, the first translator of Dante, whose scarce work is to be found in the British Museum, has "horror," and Cary mentions it with approbation. Authorities are given in this instance, because an influential critic some years ago misled the public as to the true reading, declaring that the translator (whose authorities were unnoticed) had "blundered error into orror." 37. These despicable wretches are placed in the outskirts of hell as unworthy alike of punishment or happiness. 42. Of "niuna" in the sense of "alcuna," see Monti, Proposta. (vol. i. page 2.) 52. An emblem of mankind busied in one continued round of cares and plea-

Who, mean of soul, the great refusal made.
Straight I perceived, and instant recognized 61
In that vast concourse the assembly vile
Of those by God and by his foes despised.
These wretched ones, who never were alive,
All naked stood, full sorely stung the while
By wasps and hornets that around them drive.
The cruel swarm bedewed their cheeks with blood, 67
Which trickled to their feet with many a tear,
Where worms disgusting drank the mingled flood.
Then, onward as I stretched mine eye, I saw
A mighty stream, with numbers standing near;
Whereat I said: "O master! by what law
Do these sad souls, whose state I fain would learn, 73
So eagerly to cross the river haste,
As by the doubtful twilight I discern?"
"These things," he answered me, "shall all be told,
Soon as our feet upon the bank are placed
Of Acheron, that mournful river old."
Mine eyes cast down, my looks o'erwhelmed with shame, 79
Fearing my questions had displeased the sage,
I spake not till beside the stream we came.
Lo! in a vessel o'er the gloomy tide
An old man comes—his locks all white with age:—
"Woe, woe to you, ye guilty souls!" he cried;
"Hope not that heaven shall ever bless your sight: 85
I come to bear you to the other shore,—
To ice, and fire, in realms of endless night:
And thou—who breathest still the vital air—
Begone—nor stay with these who live no more."
But when he saw that yet I lingered there—
"By other port," he said, "by other way, 91
And not by this, a passage must thou find;
Thee a far lighter vessel shall convey."
"Charon," my guide returned, "thy wrath restrain:

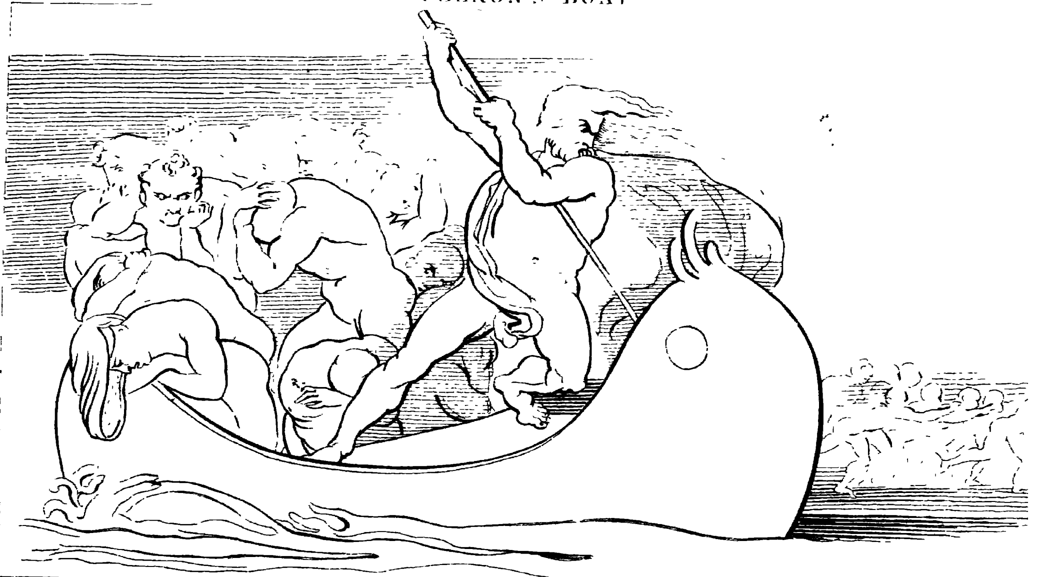
60. This is generally understood to mean Celestine V. whom Boniface persuaded to abdicate, and having obtained the Popedom himself, imprisoned, till he died. See canto xxvii. 105. 64. *i. e.* "who never used their reason," as Dante explains in his Convito Trat. ii. c 8. 83. Charon, the ferryman of Acheron. 93. That by which the spirits pass to Purgatory. See Purg. ii. 40.

Thus it is willed where will and power are joined;
Therefore submit, nor question us again."
The dark lake's pilot heard;—and at the sound 97
Fell instant his rough cheeks, while flashing ranged
His angry eyes in flaming circles round.
But they—soon as these threatenings met their ear—
Poor, naked, weary souls—their colour changed;
And their teeth chattered through excess of fear.
God they blasphemed, their parents, man's whole race, 103
The hour, the spot,—and e'en the very seed
To which their miserable life they trace.
Then, while full bitterly their sorrows flowed,
They gathered to that evil strand, decreed
To all who live not in the fear of God.
Charon, the fiend, with eyes of living coal, 109
Beckoning the mournful troop, collects them there,
And with his oar strikes each reluctant soul.
As leaves in autumn, borne before the wind,
Drop one by one, until the branch, laid bare,
Sees all its honours to the earth consigned:
So from that coast, at his dread signal, all 115
The guilty race of Adam downward pour,—
Each, as a falcon, answering to the call.
Thus pass they slowly o'er the water brown;
And ere they land on the opposing shore,
Fresh numbers from this bank come crowding down.
"All those, my son," exclaimed the courteous guide, 121
"Who in the wrath of the Almighty die,
Are gathered here from every region wide:
Goaded by heavenly Justice in its ire,
To pass the stream they rush thus hastily;
So that their fear is turned into desire.
By virtuous soul this wave is never crossed; 127
Wherefore, if Charon warn thee to depart,
The meaning of his words will not be lost."
This converse closed—the dusky region dread
Trembled so awfully, that o'er my heart
Doth terror still a chilly moisture shed.

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95. The will and the act of the Almighty are one. 114. The reading of "vede" is adopted by Tasso in preference to that of "rende."

CHARON'S BOAT



THUS PASS THEY SLOWLY O'ER THE WATER BROWN

Sent forth a blast that melancholy realm, 133
Which flashing a vermilion light around,
At once did all my senses overwhelm;
And down I sank, like one in slumber bound.

CANTO IV.

ARGUMENT.

Dante, roused from his swoon by a sound of lamentations like thunder, finds himself on the brink of the Vale of Woe. He follows his guide down into Limbo, where darkness reigns, till he arrives at the luminous habitation of the Poets, who receive him into their band, and shew him the honoured spirits of Antiquity. When they leave him, he re-enters the region of darkness.

Broke the deep slumber in my brain a hoarse 1
And heavy thunder:—starting at the sound,
I shook, like one who is aroused by force,
And straightway rising, turned my rested eye
With stedfast gaze, if haply, looking round,
The place wherein I was I might descry.
Beneath me lay, in truth, the Vale of Woe, 7
In whose abyss eternal groans unite,
And blend their thunders in the depth below.
Obscure it was,—so cloudy—deep—and dense,
That though to pierce the gloom I strained my sight,
Nought could I see within the gulf immense.
"Now go we down to dusky regions blind," 13
The poet said, with visage deadly pale;
"I lead the way—do thou pursue behind."
Then I exclaimed, of his pale looks aware,
"How shall I speed, if even thou dost quail,
Thou—who art wont to cheer me in despair?"
He answered me: "The loud laments I hear 19
From tortured souls beneath us, on my face
Pourtray that pity thou mistak'st for fear:
But let us on—for we have far to go."
He led me then within that circle's space
Which first encompasseth the Vale of Woe.
No wailings there were audible;—the sound 25
Of sighs alone was heard—convulsive sighs
That shook the everlasting air around.

---

2. This thunder proceeded from the accumulated groans in the vale of woe. See line 7

Yet flowed this sorrow from no outward pain;—
Beneath the weight of mental agonies,
Men—women—children sighed, a countless train.
"Dost thou not wish," the master said, "to know
What spirits here their sad estate bewail?
This understand, ere thou proceed below:—
They sinned not; but the good they may have wrought,
For want of baptism is of no avail;—
A doctrine of the faith thou hast been taught:
Or if they lived ere Christ brought saving grace,
Due worship unto God they failed to give:
And I am one of this benighted race
Heav'n have we lost for these defects alone;
And our's is this sole punishment—to live,
Tormented by desire, when hope is flown."
Great sorrow at his words my soul o'ercame;
For in this Limbo knew I many a wight
Once high distinguished in the ranks of fame.
And I, who wished to be instructed well
In the true faith which error puts to flight,
Exclaimed: "O tell, my lord and master, tell;—
Went ever spirit hence, who by his own
Or other's worth in aftertime was blest?"
Then he, to whom my covert thought was known,
Gave answer: "I had lately reached this round,
When lo! arrived a great and glorious Guest,
Whose head with wreath of victory was crowned.
The soul of man's first Parent hence he drew,
Abel his son, and also Noah's shade,
Moses the lawgiver, and, just and true,
The Patriarch Abraham: David,—Israel,
His father, and his sons that call obeyed,
And Rachel fair, whose love he earned so well.
For these and many others, grace he gained:
Know—that till these with happiness were blest,
No human souls salvation e'er obtained."
While thus he spoke, our journey we pursued;
And onward through the shadowy wood we pressed,
The wood of souls I mean—so thick they stood.
Not far had we descended from the height,

53. Our Saviour,—in reference to 1 Peter. iii. 19.

When I observed a flame so brightly burn,
That it o'ercame the hemisphere of night.
Though we were distant still no little space,
A noble band I could afar discern
Inhabiting this ample dwelling place.
"O glory thou of science and of art,
Say who are these before me, so renowned
That from the vulgar throng they dwell apart?"
Then answered he: "Their honourable fame,
Which in your world continues to resound,
Gains grace in heaven, and here exalts their name."
Meanwhile I heard a voice in lofty strain:
"Receive the mighty bard with honour due;—
His shade that left us, now returns again."
Ceased had the voice—when in composed array
Four noble shades approaching met my view;—
Nor joy, nor sorrow did their looks betray.
"Him," said the gracious master, "now admire,
Who in his hand a falchion doth uphold,
Before the rest advancing as their sire,—
Homer, the bard sublime who all surpass'd;
The next is Horace—Satirist famed of old,
Ovid the third, and Lucan is the last.
And since to each appropriate is the name
Which their united voice assigned to me,—
In honouring me, to them redounds the fame."
Assembled thus, was offered to my sight
The school of him, the Prince of poetry,
Who, eagle like, o'er others takes his flight.
When they together had conversed awhile,
They turned,—saluting me with courteous sign,
Which from my master drew a friendly smile:
And greater glory still they bade me share;—
Their honourable band they made me join,—
The sixth united to such genius rare.

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68. This flame represents the light of poetry in an age of barbarism and ignorance. 80. Virgil,—who had left his companions—having quitted Limbo at the request of Beatrice. Canto ii. 53. Dante calls him "altissimo poeta" here, and in his Convito, Trat. iv. 26. 84. Being in a place of neither happiness nor torment. 92. The voice which greeted the return of Virgil (line 80) was the united voice of the four poets. 98. *i. e* Saluting him as a poet. 101. Dante here anticipates his future fame.

Thus we proceeded till we reached the flame,
Speaking of things I may not now recall,
However well they then the place became.
Ere long we reached a noble castle's base,
Seven times surrounded by a lofty wall:
A limpid streamlet flowed around the place;
O'er this, as o'er dry land, we made our way.
With these great sages through seven gates I passed;
Before us then a verdant meadow lay.
Souls with sedate and placid eyes were there;
And looks of dignity around they cast;
Seldom they spake, but sweet their voices were.
Our steps aside we gently thence withdrew,
And reached an opening, spacious, light, and high,
Where all became apparent to our view.
There on the verdant and enamelled green
Were glorious spirits shown to me—whom I
Felt exaltation to have even seen.
I saw Electra, and could recognize
Hector, Æneas, 'mid a numerous band,
And mighty Cæsar, armed with griffon's eyes.
Penthesilea, and Camilla there
I saw conspicuous on the other hand,
And king Latinus, with Lavinia fair.
Brutus, who chased proud Tarquin from the throne,
Lucretia, Julia, Marcia I beheld,—
Cornelia, Saladin, apart, alone.
Him too I saw, when I had raised mine eye,
Seated aloft, in wisdom who excelled,
Amidst his philosophic family.
All look on him—to him, all homage pay:
And Socrates and Plato near him stand,
Advanced in front of that august array.
'Mid these, Democritus, Diogenes,
Thales, and Anaxagoras I scanned,—
Sage Heraclitus, and Empedocles,

108 The seven walls are said to represent the seven cardinal Virtues—the stream, Eloquence. 121. Mother of Dardanus—assigned this high place on account of her descendants who accompany her—Æneas and Cæsar—for whom Dante had great veneration, as founders of Rome, and his cherished universal monarchy. 123. Cæsar is said to have been remarkable for his dark and piercing eyes. 130. Aristotle.

With Orpheus, Zeno and Hippocrates,
Tullius, and Linus, Seneca—and wise
In nature's secrets, Dioscorides.
Galieno, Avicen, and more of note,
Euclid, and Ptolemy too met mine eyes,
Averroes, who the learned comment wrote.
I cannot now the names of more detail;—
Spurred on to haste by all I fain would say,
Full oft my pen must in description fail.
Our band of six in twain divided there:
My guide conducts me by another way
Forth from the tranquil to the trembling air;
And now I came where all in darkness lay.

CANTO V.

ARGUMENT.

Entering the second circle, Dante sees Minos, the infernal judge. He witnesses the punishment of carnal sinners, who, wrapt in darkness, are swept along by a violent hurricane. Semiramis, Dido, Helen, Paris,—Francesca of Rimini, who at Dante's request relates her misfortunes.

From the first circle made we our descent
Down to the second,—which, though less in size,
Holds grief more poignant,—forcing shrill lament.
Grinding his teeth—there Minos dreadful stands:
The culprits, as they enter in, he tries,—
Awards their sentence—issues his commands.
The guilty soul confesses all its crimes,
When brought before him: then the judge decrees
Its proper place in hell · as many times
As he himself encircles with his tail,
Such is the destined number of degrees
The souls are plunged within the infernal scale.
Crowds ever stand before him, doomed to woe;
All in succession to the Judge repair;
They speak—they hear—and then are hurled below.
"O thou, who comest to this sad abode,"
Minos exclaimed, when he beheld me there,
His dread employ suspending—"mark thy road,

---

148. Virgil and Dante quit the other poets, and proceed together.

4. Minos was a king of Crete, so famed for his inflexible justice, that the old poets supposed him to have become one of the judges in hell. See Virgil, Æn. vi. 432.

And heed thee well on whom thou dost rely; 19
Let not the spacious entrance tempt thee on."
To him my guide made answer: "Why this cry?
Check not his passage, which the fates ordain:
Thus it is willed where will and power are one;
Therefore submit—nor question us again."
Proceeding onward, I begin to hear 25
The melancholy sound of those who weep:—
Now, sharper lamentations strike mine ear.
Throughout the place speaks not the light of heaven;
And the vast region bellows loud and deep,
As when o'er ocean warring winds are driven.
The infernal blast, unceasing in its course, 31
Hurries along the miserable crowd,
Whirling and tossing with resistless force.
When they arrive before the brink extreme,
There, shrieks are heard, complaint, and wailing loud
There, the Almighty Spirit they blaspheme.
Torments like these, I learnt, were here assigned 37
To carnal sinners, who to appetite
Subject the nobler faculty of mind.
As starlings, ere the winter, in a vast
Innumerable squadron wheel their flight;
So, ever and anon, this sweeping blast,
Now up—now down,—this way, and that again 43
Impels the wretched souls:—no comfort springs,
From hope of rest, nor e'en of lessened pain.
As chaunting forth their melancholy lay
The clamorous cranes are borne upon their wings,
High marshalling in air their long array;—
Repeating thus their lamentable song, 49
Souls I beheld, who towards us quickly sped,
Swept by the dreadful hurricane along.
"O master, tell me who are these," I cried,
"Lashed by the cutting wind!" "The first," he said,
"Reigned empress over nations far and wide,
While so abandoned to voluptuousness, 55
That lest opprobrium should on her be laid,
She made her law the sanction of excess;
Semiramis her name—who, we are told,

23. See canto iii. 95. 28. Thus, in canto i. 60, the sun was said to be "mute."

At Ninus' death, her husband's sceptre swayed;
That land was her's which now the Sultans hold."
Then she, who slew herself for love, is seen, 61
And to Sichæus' ashes proved untrue.
Lo Cleopatra next, luxurious queen!
Helen I saw, for whom such years were past
Of toil and woe; the great Achilles too,
With mighty Love contending to the last.
Sir Tristram, Paris, and the thousands more 67
Whom Love had slain, he bade me then behold,
Pointing them to me, and recounting o'er.
When I had heard my sage instructor name
Those beauteous dames, and valiant knights of old,
Compassion seized on my bewildered frame.
"Fain would I speak, O gracious bard," I cried, 73
"With those two shades together flitting there,
Who seem before the wind so light to glide."
He answered me: "When they approach this way,
Invoke them by that love which brings them here,
And they will speedily thy call obey."
Soon as the hurricane had brought them nigh, 79
I raise my voice: "Come, O ye souls distrest,
And speak with us, unless High power deny."
As doves, by strong affection urged, repair
With firm expanded wings to their sweet nest,
Borne by the impulse of their will through air;
E'en thus from Dido's band these two were seen 85
Approaching lightly through that region drear;
So urgent the impassioned cry had been.
"O thou benign, compassionate, and good,

---

64. "Non servata fides cineri promissa Sichæo." Æn. iv. 552. 66. Achilles is said to have been slain through the treachery of Paris, of whose sister, Polyxena, he was enamoured. 74. Francesca and Paolo. —She was daughter of Guido da Polento, Lord of Ravenna.—"Guido engaged to give his daughter in marriage to Lanciotto, the eldest son of his enemy, the master of Rimini. Lanciotto, hideously deformed in countenance and figure, foresaw that if he presented himself in person, he should be rejected by the lady. He therefore resolved to marry her by proxy, and sent as his representative his youngest brother, Paolo, the handsomest and most accomplished man in all Italy. Francesca saw Paolo arrive, and imagined she beheld her future husband. That mistake was the commencement of her passion." Boccacio. 85. Together with Dido are punished those who have broken faith. 88. Francesca speaks. See note, line 74.

That wendest through the lurid atmosphere,
To visit us who stained the earth with blood,
Were He who rules the universe our friend, 91
We should implore him to give peace to thee,
Since thou hast pity for our hapless end.
Whether to hear or speak, make known thy will—
And we will hear or speak accordingly,
While, e'en as now, the cutting wind is still.
My native place is seated on the coast, 97
Where Po rolls down his waters to the sea,
To blend in peace his tributary host.
Love, that in noble heart is quickly caught,
Enamour'd *him* of that fair form—from me
So rudely torn,—there 's anguish in the thought.
Love, that permits no loved one not to love, 103
Me so enthralled with thought of pleasing him,
That, as thou see'st, its influence still I prove.
Love caused us both to share one common tomb:
Hell's lowest depth—Cäina, dark and dim—
Awaits our murderer:" thus she told their doom.
Soon as I heard their tale, my head I bent; 109
Nor from the ground my drooping eyes retire,
Till cried the bard: "On what art thou intent?"
When I could answer him, "Alas!" I said,
"How sweet the thoughts—how ardent the desire
That to the mournful step these lovers led!"
Then turning round to them, these words I spake: 115
"Francesca, thy misfortunes fill mine eyes
With sorrowing tears—such pity they awake.
But tell me how, and by what sign confest
Did Love reveal, in that sweet time of sighs,
The doubtful passion struggling in each breast?"
Then she to me: "There is no greater woe, 121
Than to remember days of happiness
Amid affliction;—this thy guide doth know.
But if how love did first our hearts beguile

90. *i.e.* With their own blood, at the time they were murdered. 97. Ravenna. 100. "Gentle" had formerly the meaning of "noble." Gentilezza and nobiltà are synonymous. Convito Trat. iv. 16. 107. The circle of fratricides. See canto xxxii. 59. 123. "Dottore" is explained "guida" by Volpi, and is commonly understood of Boethius, whom Dante greatly admired. But in this very canto, line 70, "Dottore" is applied to Virgil.

Thou fain wouldst hear, I will the truth confess,
As one who tells her tale, and weeps the while.—
One day, it chanced, for pastime we were reading 127
How Lancelot to love became a prey;
Alone we were—of danger all unheeding.
Our eyes oft met as we that tale pursued;
And from our cheeks the colour died away;
But in a moment were our hearts subdued:
For when we read of him so deep in love, 133
Kissing at last the smile long time desired,
Then he, who from my side will ne'er remove,
My lips, all trembling, kissed:—well may I say
That book was Galeot—Galeot, he who fired
Its baneful page:—we read no more that day."
While thus one spake, such tears the other shed, 139
That pity all my faculties did quell;
And reft of sense, like one already dead,
As falls a lifeless body, down I fell.

CANTO VI.

ARGUMENT.

On recovering his senses, Dante finds himself in the third circle, where the Gluttons are punished, lying on the ground beneath a pelting storm of rain, snow, and hail. Ciacco foretels to Dante the future change of parties in Florence, where he says only two just men are to be found.

Soon as my mind its wonted powers renewed, 1
Which, at the sufferings of that kindred pair,
By overwhelming sorrow was subdued,—
New torments all around me I descry;
Tormented spirits I behold, where'er
I move or turn, where'er I cast mine eye.
Now the third circle have I reached, where rain 7
Accursed—heavy—cold—eternal flows;
No change—no respite in this dread domain.
Dark water tumbled through the gloom profound,
With snow and hail terrific; whence arose
A noisome stench from all the putrid ground.

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128. Lancelot was one of the Knights of the Round Table, and the lover of Genevra, celebrated in romance. 137. *i.e.* The book was to Francesca and Paolo what Galeotto, or Galehaut, in the romance they had been reading, was to Lancelot and Genevra.

Cerberus, that cruel beast, devoid of form, 13
Stands barking like a dog with triple jaw
O'er the sad souls forced downward by the storm.
Red are his eyes, large belly he displays,
A black and greasy beard: with savage claw
He seizes on the spirits, tears, and flays.
Like whelps they howl beneath the inclement rain; 19
And with one side the other side defending,
Oft turn themselves these wretched souls profane.
When Cerberus viewed us, as we nearer came,
The monstrous worm, his triple mouth extending.
Showed his huge tusks, and shook through all his frame.
Then on the ground his either hand my guide 25
Stretched out; and when he both with earth had filled,
Cast it within those craving gullets wide.
And as a dog that barks with ravening jaw,
The moment that he tastes the food, is stilled,—
Intent alone to glut his greedy maw;
So Cerberus ceased his filthy jaws to use, 31
Who at the spirits with such fury storms,
That they full gladly would their hearing lose.
Now o'er the shades, close bent to shun the sleet,
We took our road, and on their empty forms,
Which seemed substantial, did we place our feet.
Stretched on the ground, they all recumbent lay, 37
Save one, who from his seat uprose in haste,
As soon as he beheld us pass that way.
"O thou who visitest these realms," he said,
"Recal me to thy memory, if thou mayest,
For thou wert born before my spirit fled."
"The anguish thou art suffering doth erase 43
Thy form," I said, "so wholly from my mind,
Methinks I never have beheld thy face:
But tell me who thou art, thus sadly thrust
Within this place of woe;—though one may find
Pangs more intense, yet none can more disgust."
"Thy city," he made answer, "where so rife 49
Is envy, that no limits can restrain,

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13. The three-headed dog of ancient mythology. The Demons who preside in the several circles are symbols of the vices punished therein; and Cerberus is the emblem of Gluttony. 49. Florence. See canto xv. 68.

THE LOVERS PUNISHED



AS FALLS A LIFELESS BODY DOWN I FELL

Was my abode in the serener life.
Ye, O my citizens, to mark my taste,
Erst named me Ciacco: here amid the rain
For gluttony thou seest my body waste:
Nor I alone this weight of misery bear;— 55
All these unhappy souls, condemned to smart
For like offences, like affliction share."
"O Ciacco," I replied, "thy misery
So weighs me down, it makes the tears to start:
But tell me, if thou knowest, what will be
Attempted in the factious city next? 61
Doth one just man within its boundary dwell?
And why by such fierce discord is it vext?"
"After long struggle blood," he said, "shall flow;
The woodland party shall the other quell,
And with dire slaughter chase away their foe.
Yet, ere three years shall humbled be their pride; 67
The other shall prove victor by his aid
Who now cajoling, flatters either side.
Long time shall these their foreheads lift on high,
While heavy weights are on the other laid,
Though fierce their rage, and pitiful their cry.
Two just ones are there, but unheard their call;— 73
For Envy, Pride, and Avarice combine—
Three fatal sparks—to fire the hearts of all."
Here ended he his lamentable strain.
Then I: "More knowledge to impart be thine;
And farther converse I entreat thee deign.
Tegghiaio, and Farinata, names of worth, 79

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53 Ciacco is a nick-name, signifying a hog, and here applied to a Florentine epicure. 61. Florence—divided at this time (1300) into the factions of the Neri and Bianchi. See canto xxiv. 143, and "Memoir of Dante." 65. *i. e.* The Bianchi (called the Woodland party, from their leaders the Cerchi, a new family who came from the country), shall prevail against the Neri. 67. Within three years they will recover their power by the aid of Charles of Valois, who cajoled both parties. 73. This is an answer to the second question, line 62. Who these were (the only two just men in Florence) is not known. Dante and his friend Guido Cavalcanti are by some supposed to be intended. 79. Tegghiaio Aldobrandi. See xvi. 41. Tegghiaio is a dissyllable. Of Farinata, see canto x. 32, and notes. These men are praised for their patriotism, but placed in hell for their vices.

And Rusticucci, Mosca, with the rest
Who bent their minds to working good on earth—
Say where they are, in answer to my prayers;
And tell, to satisfy my longing breast,
If bliss in heaven, or woe in hell be theirs."
" 'Mid blacker souls," he said, " they're doomed to dwell;
If thou descend,—for crime of different dye 86
Thou wilt behold them buried deep in hell.
But when to the sweet world thou shalt return,
I pray thee to revive my memory:
No more I say;—no more seek thou to learn."
His stedfast eyes askance he then inclined,— 91
A moment gazed on me,—then downward bent,
And falling, joined his other comrades blind.
" Ne'er shall he rise again," the master said,
" Till, when the Power of vengeance shall be sent,
The angelic trumpet wake him from the dead.
Each soul shall then regain its mournful tomb,— 97
Regain the flesh and pristine form it wore,
And hear pronounced the everlasting doom."
O'er rain and shadows thus we took our road—
A mixture foul;—and as we onward bore,
Some converse on the life to come bestowed.
Then I: " O master, will these pangs be made 103
More sharp, when sentence hath been past by heaven,
Or lessened, or remain thus fierce?" He said:
" Remember, that the nearer each attain
A perfect state, a finer sense is given
To thrill with pleasure, or to throb with pain.
Though true perfection never can be their's, 109
Yet, for this race accurst, in misery bound,
Heaven, after judgment, worthier doom prepares."
Then speaking more than to repeat I care,
We made a circuit that sad coast around;
And at the point, whence downward leads the stair,
Plutus, the mighty enemy, we found.

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106. *i. e.* Remember the saying of Aristotle. 115. The god of riches, and therefore the great enemy of mankind.

CANTO VII.

ARGUMENT.

At the entrance of the fourth circle, Plutus, the ancient god of riches, endeavours to terrify Dante, but is silenced by Virgil. The Avaricious and Prodigal are here punished, and among the former, many Popes and Cardinals. Virgil takes occasion to speak of Fortune, and the fickleness of earthly possessions. They enter the fifth circle, where the wrathful and gloomy are punished in the lake of Styx.

"Papé Satan, Satan Aleppé," cried
The voice of Plutus, thundering loud and hoarse;
Whereat, apprized of all, my sapient guide
Exclaimed, to comfort me: "Let not dismay
Confound thy senses; for his utmost force
Shall nought avail to check thy downward way."
Then turning round: "Be silent, Wolf accurst,"
He sternly said to that swollen lip abhorred;
"And let thy furious rage within thee burst.
Not without sanction we descend below;—
For thus 'tis willed on high, where Michael's sword
On the adulterer struck the vengeful blow."
As sweeping round, when sudden splits the mast,
Sails bellying with the wind are headlong thrown,
So quickly fell to earth the monster vast.
Thus to the fourth abyss we made descent,
Still gaining on that mournful bank of stone,
In which the ills of all the world are pent.
Justice divine! of the dire toils I saw,
And novel punishments, oh! who can speak?—
Why bring we on ourselves such fearful law?
As rising o'er Charybdis' rocky height
Waves meeting waves in dreadful conflict break,
Thus, wheeling round, these souls are doomed to fight.
Elsewhere I saw not such a numerous crowd:—
Enormous weights they with their breasts impelled
From side to side, nor ceased to howl aloud.

---

1. This exclamation of Plutus, the god of riches, is evidently intended to frighten Dante, and seems to mean "Avaunt, for Satan is Prince here." The line is thus stopped, and explained by Signor Rossetti: "Pap'è Satan, Pap'è Satan, Aleppe." "The Pope is Satan, the Pope is Satan, Prince."
7. That Plutus is the symbol of Avarice is evident from his being identified with the Wolf of the first canto. 12. *i. e.* Lucifer.

Clashing they met :—then turned ; and harsh abuse
Each on the other pouring, fiercely yelled ;
" Thou, why so niggard ?" " Thou, why so profuse ?"
Round the dark circle, till they met again, 31
Thus they pursued their course on either hand,
Vociferating still their taunting strain.
Midway arriving—to renew the fight,
Back o'er the semicircle turns each band :
And I, whose heart was stricken at the sight,
Exclaimed : " O thou, my master, tell, I pray, 37
What race is this ? and these upon the left
With closely-shaven heads, all Priests were they ?"
To me he said : " All these before thy view,
In their first life of reason were so reft,
No medium in the use of wealth they knew.
This by their words is clearly proved, each time 43
They meet, as round the circle they repair,
Parting anon—so opposite their crime.
Priests once, both Popes and Cardinals were they,
Whose heads uncovered are devoid of hair ;
O'er them foul Avarice held unbounded sway.
" Amid so many, master," I replied, 49
" I surely ought to recognize some few,
Who, when alive, were with these vices dyed."
Then he : " Thou hast devised a project vain ;—
Since that inglorious life, which now they rue,
Permitteth none to know them here again.
For ever will they clash with double shocks ; 55
And at the resurrection quit the tomb,—
These with clenched hands, and those with shaven locks.
Spendthrift and miser thus renew the fight,
Driven from the beauteous world to realms of gloom :
Words need I not to paint their evil plight.
Now see the gifts to Fortune's care consigned, 61
How swift, my son, how variable their gale,—
Sought with such anxious labour by mankind ;

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30. The Avaricious and Prodigal are not only punished together, but are made the instruments of punishing each other. 46. In thus instancing Popes and Cardinals solely, Dante does not mean that they alone were guilty of avarice, but that they were the most conspicuous examples; and he tells us elsewhere, Par. xvii. 133, that he purposely selects them from the highest rank, to give his reproof the greater weight.

For all the gold that is beneath the moon,
Or all that ever was, could not avail
These weary souls, or purchase rest for one."
"Tell me," I said, "O master, if thou mayest,— 67
This Fortune, that thou speak'st of, what is she,
In whose control all worldly goods are placed?"
Then answered he: "O creatures weak and blind,
How led astray by ignorance are ye!
Now let my maxims sink into thy mind.—
He, whose transcendent Wisdom hath no bound, 73
Fashioned the Heavens, and gave to them a guide,
Distributing an equal light around,
So that each part to other part might shine:
And thus o'er earthly splendours to preside
A ministering Power did he assign,
To deal life's fleeting goods with varying hand; 79
And, spite the impediments of human skill,
To change from race to race, from land to land.
Hence doth one nation rise, another fall,
Obedient to her ever-changing will,
Who lies, like snake in grass, concealed from all.
In vain, 'gainst her your earthly wisdom vies;. 85
With foresight and with judgment she maintains
Her destined sway, like other Deities.
Her changes have no rest—for ever new:
To speed her on, Necessity constrains;
And hence vicissitudes so oft ensue.
And she it is, on whose devoted head 91
Are heaped such vile reproach and calumny
By those whose praise she rather merited.
But she is blest, and hears not what they say;
With other primal beings, joyously
She rolls her sphere, exulting on her way.—

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74. This is according to the doctrine that each of the supposed material heavens has its corresponding Intelligence or Angel. See "The Material Heavens," prefixed to the Paradiso. 78. *i. e.* The operations of Fortune are not the result of chance, but of foresight, and she herself is one of the ministers of heaven, appointed in her peculiar sphere to superintend the distribution of temporal blessings. "The Fortune of the ancients is with us more properly called Divine Providence." Dante, De Monarchia, b. ii. p. 110. Fraticelli, ii. 87. By these Deities are meant the Angels or Intelligences, of whom an account is prefixed to the Paradiso.

Now go we down to realms of greater pain : 97
Each star, which at my outset was ascending,
Is sinking, and forbids us to remain."
We crossed the circle to the other side,
Above a boiling fount our footsteps bending,
From whence a sluice convey'd the gushing tide.
More dark than purple was that water's flow ; 103
And we beside the mournful river dun
Proceeded by a rugged path below :
A lake is formed, the Stygian named of old,
By this sad stream, when downward it hath run
'Neath the grey rocks that hem the baleful hold.
Wondering I stood ; and saw within the lake 109
A crew all naked, and with mud o'erspread,
Whose threatening looks their inward rage bespake :
Each struck the other not with hands alone,
But with the breast, and with the feet and head ;
Their teeth too tore each other to the bone.
"My son," the gracious master said, "behold 115
The spirits who were erst by wrath subdued ;
And give belief to what I now unfold.
Beneath the stream are souls that utter sighs,
Whence bubbles to the surface may be viewed
Ascending, wheresoe'er you turn your eyes.
Deep fixed in mud, 'Sad were we,' they exclaim, 121
'There, where the sun sends forth his gladsome ray,
Bearing within a foul and smothered flame ;
Sad are we now within this filthy lake.'
They gurgle in their throat this dismal lay,
Since utterance more distinct they cannot make."
Thus circling round the noisome pool we went, 127
Between the centre and the humid beach ;
On those who drank the mud our sight intent ;
Until at last a lofty tower we reach.

CANTO VIII.

ARGUMENT.

In answer to a signal from a tower in the red city of Dis, or Satan, which shortly appears in sight, Flegias, the ferryman of the Stygian lake,

127. The Stygian lake.

conveys the poet across it into the fifth circle. Filippo Argenti.— gates of the city are closed by a band of fallen Angels, and Virgil r turns in despair.

Now tell I, as my story I pursue, 1
That ere we reached the lofty castle's base,
Two little flames upon its summit drew
Our eyes in wonder; while another made
Answer, so distant, we could scarcely trace
The flickering glimmer from afar displayed.
Then to the sea of knowledge turned—I said: 7
"Wherefore this signal? why that answering light?
And who are they by whom these flames are fed?"
"What now advances o'er yon gloomy tide,
Is surely," he exclaimed, "within thy sight,
Unless indeed the marshy vapours hide."
With greater speed did never arrow fly 13
Forth from the string, and cut the yielding air,
Than, o'er the lake approaching met mine eye,
A little vessel, under the controul
Of but a single boatman; who, aware
Exclaimed: "Art thou arrived, O felon soul?"
"Flegias, Flegias, the outcry thou dost make 19
For once avails thee not," exclaimed the sire;
"We stay not with thee but to cross the lake."
As one, who of some monstrous fraud hath heard
Practised upon him, gives his soul to ire;
So Flegias stood, to sudden anger stirred.
Into the boat descended then my guide, 25
And bade me follow close upon his track:
Till I embarked no burden pressed the tide.
When both were seated, on it sped;—and now
To depth unwonted was that river black
Cut by the impress of the ancient prow.
Whilst we were hurrying o'er the stagnant slime, 31

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5. The distant flame which answers the signal, proceeds from one of the towers of the city of Dis, whence the poets were separated by the Stygian lake. The signal is made by one set of Demons to advise another that strangers were approaching. 7. The "sea of knowledge" is Virgil. 19. Flegias was a son of Mars, sentenced to hell for burning the temple of Apollo at Delphi. His name signifies fire, and he is the conductor to the city of fire. Virgil informs him, exulting over his supposed victims, that for once he would be disappointed.

One rose before me, smeared with mud, and cried:
 "Say who art thou that com'st before thy time?"
"I come not to remain.—but who," quoth I,
 "Art thou that hast thyself so brutified?"
 "Lo! one am I who weeps," was his reply.
And I to him: "With weeping and with woe, 37
 Thy fitting company, curst soul, remain;—
 All muddy though thou art, thy face I know."
Then to the boat his hands were thrown anon:
 Whereat the master thrust him back again,
 Exclaiming. "To the other dogs begone."
With this, around my neck his arms he flung, 43
 And kissed my cheek: "Indignant soul," said he,
 "How blest the mother from whose womb you sprung!
He, when alive, was arrogant, and proud,
 No deed of goodness decks his memory;
 And therefore here his spirit storms aloud.
On earth how many deem themselves great kings, 49
 Who here like swine shall wallow in a sty,
 And leave a name that vile remembrance brings!"
"O what delight would it afford my heart
 To see him plunged within the pool," said I,
 "Ere from the filthy waters we depart!"
Then he to me: "Thou shalt be satisfied, 55
 Before the infernal shore appears in sight;
 'Tis meet that such a wish be not denied."
Soon after, I beheld the muddy crew
 Set on him with such violence and might,
 That God I thank for granting me the view.
"Down with Argenti!" shouted one and all; 61
 And with his teeth, his furious wrath to vent,
 Himself this savage Florentine did maul.
We journey'd on,—so him no more I name.
 Then smote mine ear a loud and shrill lament,
 Whereat I stretched mine eye to whence it came.
"Behold, my son," to me the master cried, 67
 "We now draw near the city named of Dis,
 Where crowds of guilty citizens reside."
"Master," I said, "already I discern
 Its bright vermilion mosques in the abyss,

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32. Filippo Argenti.—See line 61.

Which, as in furnace heated, seem to burn."
He answered me: "The fire that ever glows
Within the walls, that ruddy hue supplies,
Which these infernal battlements disclose."
Then we arrived within the trench profound
That compasseth this wretched land of sighs,
And framed of iron seem'd the walls around.
A tedious circuit made, at last we came
Where, "Disembark – the entrance is in sight,"—
We heard the pilot's thundering voice exclaim.
More than a thousand on the gates I spied,
Rained down from heaven;—and shouting in despite,
"Say who is this, that (death's dread power untried)
Stalks through the dusky regions of the dead?"
By signal the great master let them know
That secret parley he solicited.
Their mighty wrath they somewhat then restrained:
"Come thou alone," they cried, "and let him go,
Who so audaciously hath entrance gained.
Let him retrace alone his foolish way:—
Thou, by whose guidance he was hither brought
Through this benighted land, with us shalt stay."
Think, reader, how disconsolate was I
At sound of words with such deep malice fraught:—
Methought I never should return on high.
"O thou dear guide, who safety hast bestowed
Seven times at least, and borne me scathless through,
When direst peril hath beset my road—
O leave me not," I said, "in this dismay;
And if such dreaded obstacles ensue,
Together let us speed our backward way."
Then answered me my kind and faithful guide:
"Fear not, for none a passage can deny—
By one so potent is our strength supplied:
Wait my return, and feed thy heavy sprite
With goodly hope;—for be assured that I
Will never leave thee in these realms of night."
He thus departs.—Abandoned by my friend,
Alone I stand in sorrowful suspense,
While "no" and "yes" within my heart contend.

83. From this expression the Demons appear to be fallen Angels.

Nor could I aught distinguish what he said;
  But scarce had he begun a conference,
  When back within the walls they quickly sped.
Against my master's breast our spiteful foe
  The portals closed.—Shut out—he came away,
  And turned him back to me with footsteps slow.
His eyes cast down, and from his brow all trace
  Of boldness gone—in sighs he seemed to say,
  "Who bars my entrance to this mournful place?"
Then unto me he said: "Be not afraid
  At this my wrath;—their pride we shall abate,
  Whate'er resistance may within be made.
This their audacity is nothing new,
  For erst 'twas shown at a less secret gate
  Which, void of fastening, still remains in view.
Its deadly motto thou thyself hast read:
  And lo, already One descendeth down,
  Passing the circles, by no escort led,
Who yet with victory our attempt shall crown."

CANTO IX.

ARGUMENT.

Dante, alarmed at some doubts expressed by Virgil as to their success in forcing an entrance into the city of Dis, in the sixth circle, is comforted by the assurance of his guide, that he has been the road before, and knows it well. The Furies appear. An Angel sent from heaven opens the gate of the city. The poets enter, and find it full of tombs intensely heated by fire, in which are punished the Arch-heretics.

THAT hue, which fear had o'er my features spread,
  When I beheld my leader backward turn,
  Caused him to check his own unwonted dread.
Attent he stood, as one with listening ear;
  For with his eye he could not far discern
  Through the black cloud and heavy atmosphere.

125. The gate at the entrance into hell. This is supposed by Dante to have been broken open by our Saviour, when, coming to liberate the souls of the Fathers, he was resisted by these Demons. See Canto iv. 53. 128. An Angel is sent from heaven to their assistance, who in the next canto enables them to enter the city of Dis.

4. Unable to see far, he endeavours, by listening, to ascertain the approach of the expected messenger from heaven, alluded to at the end of the last canto.

He then began: "Yet shall we win the day: 7
If not . . . so great a One hath proffered aid;—
But oh!—how long he lingers on his way!"
I saw full well how he designed to cloak
The doubts he at the outset had betrayed,
His last words differing from the first he spoke.
Nathless, his speech with terror filled my breast. 13
For haply from his broken words I drew
A more alarming sense than they possessed.
"Down from that circle of the dread abyss
Where loss of hope alone the spirits rue,
Doth any e'er descend so low as this?"
I asked this question; and he answered thus: 19
"It rarely happens that the road I go
Hath e'er been ventured on by one of us.
'Tis true, aforetime I have gone this track,
By fell Erichtho conjured down below,
Who to their bodies calls the spirits back.
Short space had I put off my mortal clay, 25
When she enjoined me pass within this wall,
From Judas' round, to bear a soul away:
That is the lowest place and most obscure,
And farthest from the heaven which circles all:
I know the road—feel therefore thou secure.
This marsh, whence vapours rise so foul and rife, 31
Surrounds that mournful city, which denies
All entrance, save with bitterness and strife."
And more he said than memory can recite;
With such deep fixed attention were mine eyes
Drawn to the castle of the flaming light.
There, on a sudden rising up, I viewed 37
Three hellish Furies:—stained with blood they were;

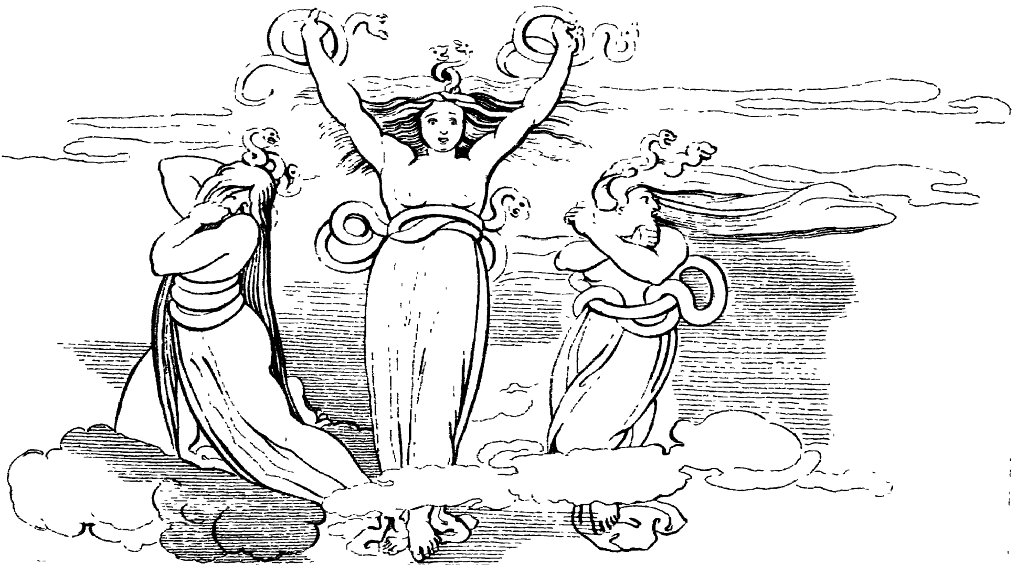
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7. Disappointed in his expectation of hearing the motion of the Angel's wings, of whom he had caught a glimpse at the end of the last canto, Virgil betrays his doubts in broken language:—"We are sure to conquer, unless I am deceived: yet so mighty is the expected aid, it cannot fail." 16. Dante fearing Virgil might not know the way, and wishing to avoid a direct question, asks him, whether any one of those who dwell with him in Limbo ever descended so low. Virgil undeceives him as to his being in the lowest pit of hell. 23. A Thessalian sorceress. 27. The lowest circle, named after Judas Iscariot, in which traitors are punished.—See xxxiv. 62. 32. The city of Dis. 36. The light before mentioned, canto viii. 5,—then seen at a distance.

And female seemed their limbs and attitude.
Green hydras twined their hideous waists around;
And serpents and cerastes formed the hair,
Whose mantling coils their savage temples bound.
Then he, who knew the horrid beldames well, 43
Attendant on the Queen of endless woe,
Exclaimed to me: "Behold the Erynnis fell:
This is Megæra on the left;—the dread
Alecto weeps upon the right!—and lo!
Tisiphone between."—No more he said.
Then fiercely with her nails each rent her breast; 49
Struck with her hands; and shrieked in such despite,
That to the bard I clung, with fear opprest.
"Haste, bring Medusa—change him into stone,"
All cried, as they looked downward from the height;
"This comes of favour unto Theseus shewn."
"Turn back, and from the Gorgon hide thine eyes; 55
For shouldst thou look on her, whom none withstands,
Vain were the hope again to view the skies."
Thus as the master spake, he sudden wheeled
My body round, nor trusted to my hands,
But with his own my countenance concealed.
O ye, with lofty intellect endowed, 61
Behold the secret lore intended here,
Which my mysterious minstrelsy would shroud!
Now o'er the restless waves there came a sound.
As of a mighty crashing—fraught with fear,
Which shook both shores throughout the vast profound;
Like to the raging of a mighty wind, 67
Which, rushing swift to cool some fervid zone,
Shatters the wood; and sweeping unconfined
Tears off the boughs, beats down, and hurls away,
In clouds of dust advances proudly on,
And fills the beasts and shepherds with dismay.
He loosed my eyes, and, "Let their energies 73

44. Proserpine, Queen of Hell. 45. The Furies. 54. Translated according to the interpretation of Lombardi. The Furies repent at not having destroyed Theseus, as well as Pirithous, when they came for Proserpine—his escape having thus afforded others a precedent to attempt the journey. 62. Commentators have laboured in vain to explain the allusion in these lines. 68. Mark Dante's explanation of the origin of wind. 70. "Porta fuori" is the reading adopted.

THE FURIES.



THIS IS MEGÆRA ON THE LEFT   THE DREAD
ALECTO WEEPS UPON THE RIGHT   AND LO!
TISIPHONE BETWEEN Inf. IX. 46

Be turned," he said, "high o'er that ancient scum,
There, where the most offensive vapours rise."
Like frogs that flee, when scattered in the flood
By some dire serpent, till to land they come,
Plunging head foremost, nuzzling in the mud;—
So saw I full a thousand spirits lost
Fleeing before the face of One, who o'er
The Stygian wave with feet unmoistened crossed.
The heavy air he from his visage cleared,
Waving the left hand oft his face before,
And weary with that single toil appeared.
Heaven's messenger he was, I plainly saw,
And to the master turned; whereat he straight
Made sign that I should bend in silent awe.
Ah! what disdain, methought, his looks disclosed!
Touched by his potent wand, the hostile gate
Flew instant open, nor his will opposed.
"Outcasts of heaven!—O abject race!" he cried,
Upon the horrid threshold as he stood;
"Whence in you dwells this insolence and pride?
Why do ye kick against the heavenly will,
Which cannot fail to make its purpose good,
And oft hath caused you an increase of ill?
What profits it 'gainst fate to butt the horn?—
Think how your Cerberus such attempt repented,
As testify his chin and gullet torn."
Then back he turned along the filthy shore,
Nor spoke a word; but seemed like one tormented
By other care and other trouble more
Than by the thought of him within his view.
Fired by the hallowed words, with footstep bold,
And firm assurance, we our way pursue.
The city then we entered unopposed:
And I, who was desirous to behold
The state of those by such strong walls enclosed,
Soon as I entered, cast around mine eyes.

74. This scum is the exhalation from the Stygian lake. 80. The heavenly messenger or Angel.—The city of Dis is by Rossetti in his ingenious Commentary considered to mean Florence, and the heavenly messenger, Henry of Luxemborg, who was refused admittance into that city by the rebellious Guelfs. See note to Par. xxx. 136. 98. Cerberus attempted to resist the entrance of Hercules into hell.

On every side a spacious district lay,
Replete with torment, and with miseries.
And as at Arles, where Rhone scarce seems to glide;—
And as at Pola, near Quarnaro's bay,
(Which, bounding fair Italia, laves her side,)
Tombs thickly spread diversify the ground: 115
E'en so vast tombs, resembling those I see,
Save that in horror these much more abound;
For scattered 'mid the graves were flames of fire,
Which heated them to such intense degree,
That hotter iron could no craft require.
The lids of all of them were hanging o'er; 121
And they within, by many a wretched moan
Betrayed the grievous anguish that they bore.
Then I: "O master, say what souls are here,
Who buried in these vaults their pangs make known,
By sighs that fall so doleful on the ear?"
"Here, with their followers of each sect," he said, 127
"Dwell the Arch-heretics, a concourse vast;
More than thou deemest in the tombs are laid.
These monuments have less or greater heat;
Together buried, like with like are classed."
And then, as to the right I turn'd my feet,
Between the tombs and ramparts high we passed.

CANTO X.

ARGUMENT.

Amid the tombs of the heretics, Farinata, the great Ghibelline chief, and father-in-law of Guido Cavalcanti, Dante's most intimate friend, rises up and addresses Dante from one of the sepulchres. He takes credit to himself for saving Florence, when the rest of the Ghibellines would have destroyed it.

Now passed we onward by a path confined, 1
That ran between the tombs and circling wall,
My master first—I following close behind.
"Virtue supreme! who through these circles dire
Dost lead me," I began, "thy willing thrall—
O speak and satisfy my soul's desire.
The spirits in these sepulchres who lie— 7
May they be seen?—their lids, as I discern,

4. This invocation is addressed to Virgil.—See canto xxi. 84.

E'en now are raised, and none to guard are nigh."
" All will be fastened down," the bard replied,
" When from Jehoshaphat they shall return,
Clothed in the bodies they have laid aside.
Here Epicurus hath his fiery tomb, 13
And with him all his followers, who maintain
That soul and body share one common doom.
Wherefore within this place, to the request
Thou hast preferred, an answer shalt thou gain;
And likewise to the wish thou hast suppressed."
Then I: " From thee I ne'er conceal a thought, 19
Unless, dear guide, to shorten what I say;—
A lesson thou thyself hast lately taught."
" Tuscan, who through this city fraught with fire,
Speaking so modestly, dost wend thy way,—
Here, may it please thee, stay at my desire.
Thy words full clearly make it manifest 25
Thou art a native of that noble land,
Which I perhaps too sorely did molest."
Sudden from out a vault, upon mine ear
These accents burst; whereat I took my stand
Still closer to my master's side, through fear.
And he exclaimed: " Turn round; what would'st thou do?
Lo Farinata!—upward from the waist 32
His form behold, apparent to thy view."
Already on his face my eyesight fell;
And he upreared his forehead and his breast,
As if he felt supreme contempt for Hell.
Towards him, with prompt and animated hand, 37
My guide among the tombs impelled me on;
And said:—" Speak clear, that he may understand."
When nearer to the sepulchre I came,
He gazed upon me;—then in haughty tone
Exclaimed: " Who were thine ancestors?" Their name,

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11. According to the common opinion, that the last judgment will be held in the valley of Jehoshaphat. See Joel iii. 2. 18. *Viz.* The hope of seeing Farinata. See vi. 86. 32. Farinata degli Uberti was the distinguished head of the Ghibelline party at Florence in the time of Frederick II. He is placed in hell as a heretic; but his heresy is palliated by Sismondi on the grounds " that he was disgusted with the vices and hypocrisy of the Popes." 42. Farinata was proud of his birth,—Dante, whom he took for some plebeian, equally so: hence his eagerness to return an answer.

Full anxious to obey, did I avow;
And gladly told him who my fathers were.
Whereat incensed he somewhat raised his brow:
"To me and to my party so averse,"
He said, "were they, and such the hate they bare,
That twice their hostile ranks did I disperse."
"Though vanquished, still they failed not to return
Each time, from every quarter," I replied,—
"An art thy friends as yet have failed to learn."
Then, upward from the chin distinctly seen,
Another shade rose slowly at his side,
Resting himself upon his knees, I ween.
He looked around me, e'en as if he sought
Another in my company to find;
But, when he saw how vain the pleasing thought,
Weeping, he said: "If lofty genius be
Of power to lead thee through this prison blind—
Where is my son? why comes he not with thee?
I answered him: "I come not here alone:
Lo! yonder is my faithful escort, whom
Haply thy Guido had disdained to own."
Of him already I divined the name,
Both by his words, and his appropriate doom;
Whence from my lips so full an answer came.
Then on a sudden starting up—he cries,
"Had! didst thou tell me?—ceases he to live?—
Doth heaven's sweet light no longer strike his eyes?"
When he observed a short delay ensue,
Ere I an answer to his speech could give,
Supine he fell, and disappeared from view.
But that exalted spirit who had been

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48. Having learnt that Dante's ancestors were Guelfs, Farinata shows his indignation by his manner, and exults in having twice defeated them. 49. Dante reminds Farinata that the Guelfs had returned after both these defeats, which was more than the Ghibellines had done. 52. Near to Farinata, and interrupting his discourse, rises the shade of Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti. Overhearing the conversation, and aware of Dante's presence, he was desirous to make inquiry concerning his son Guido Cavalcanti, Dante's intimate friend, who married a daughter of Farinata. 63. The partiality of the father ascribes to his son, who was a poet, (see Purg. xi. 97) a genius equal to that of Dante. Dante answers that he is attended by Virgil, for whom Guido it seems had no taste. 70. Guido was still alive according to the supposed date of the poem (1300).

Cause of my lingering there, had neither turned
His head, nor bowed his neck, nor changed his mien;
"And if," continuing his speech, he said,
"The art thou speakest of they so ill have learned,
That more torments me than this fiery bed.
But the fair lady who rules here below, 79
Not fifty times her silver face shall light,
Ere thou the value of that art wilt know.
And mayst thou see the beauteous world again,
As thou acquaint me why, my friends to spite,
Such cruel laws your people still retain."
I answered him: "the rout and carnage made, 85
When Arbia's stream was stained with crimson dye,
Tell why such vows are in our temples paid."
Then said he, sighing as his head he shook:
"In that encounter not alone was I,
Nor without cause such part with others took;
But when assembled numbers had decreed 91
To sweep fair Florence from the earth away,
My voice alone was raised against the deed."
"So by thy kindred may repose be found,
As thou unravellest," (thus to him I pray)
"The knot in which my intellect is bound.
Future events ere time may yet unfold, 97
It seems ye can foretel, if right I learn;—
Unable what is present to behold."
"Like one who hath a weak and failing sight,
Objects remote," he answered, "we discern;—
The mighty God imparteth still such light.
When they are present, or approach—all vain 103

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79. The Moon—"Queen of the reign of Pluto."—*Chaucer*. 81. Farinata here intimates to Dante his impending exile. 84. *i. e.* The vindictive sentence constantly renewed against the exiled Ghibellines. 86. The battle of Arbia or Mont' Aperti, was fought in 1260, on the occasion of the Florentine Guelfs advancing to attack the exiled Ghibellines, who had taken refuge at Sienna. On their arrival, out rushed the Ghibellines from the city, headed by Farinata, and gained a complete victory. 91. After the battle the greatest alarm prevailed at Florence. The victorious Ghibellines proposed to destroy the city, as the stronghold of the Guelfs, when Farinata (himself a Ghibelline) addressed the assembly, and saved Florence from destruction. 96. Dante is perplexed at Farinata being able to predict future events, though Cavalcanti did not know his son's fate.

Our reason proves; nor of your mortal state,
Except from others, can we knowledge gain.
Now therefore mayst thou fully comprehend,
When once is closed futurity's dark gate,
All our intelligence will have an end."
Then with compunction smitten as it were,
I said: "Inform that fallen one, I pray,
That still his Guido breathes the vital air.
And if from answer I at first refrained,
Tell him, my erring thoughts were led astray,
Pondering on that which thou hast now explained."
Then with more haste I pressed him to relate
(For Virgil's summons fell upon mine ear)
What shades partook of his unhappy fate.
"Here with above a thousand souls I lie:
Here is the second Frederick, and here
The Cardinal: the others I pass by."
This said, he vanished. Not without alarm
I turned unto the ancient bard again,
Musing on what to me portended harm.
Onward he moved, and, as he went, inquired:
"What is it thus bewildereth thy brain?"
And I revealed the cause, as he desired.
"What thou hast heard of evils that impend,
Store in thy memory," the poet said;
"And now" (his finger he upraised) "attend:
When thou shalt stand before her heavenly ray,
Whose beauteous eyes through all extent pervade,

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109. For not having told Cavalcanti that his son was alive, and relieved his suspense. 113. *i. e.* The error of supposing that the spirits were acquainted with things present as well as past. 119. Frederick II. was crowned in 1220—excommunicated by Gregory IX.—finally worsted in his long contest with the Popes, who set Italy in a rebellious league against him, and died in 1250. For defending his inheritance against the unwarrantable attacks of successive Popes, this prince has been represented by Catholic writers as devoid of virtue and religion. "I am not aware of any period in the reign of Frederick when he was not obliged to act in his defence against the aggressions of others. If he had been a model of virtues, such men as Honorius III. Gregory IX. and Innocent IV. (the Popes with whom he had successively to contend,) would not have given him respite while he remained in possession of Naples as well as the empire."—*Hallam, Middle Ages,* c. iii. part 1. 120. Ottaviano Ubaldini—more of a politician than a priest, and a distinguished adherent of the Ghibelline party. 123. Farinata's prediction as to his exile, line 81. 130. Beatrice.

She shall inform thee of thy future way."
Then turning to the left my guide proceeds: 133
Leaving the rampart towards the gulf we went
Along a path that to a valley leads,
Which e'en to us its noisome vapour sent.

CANTO XI.

ARGUMENT.

On the verge of the seventh circle are punished the Heretics, the Violent, the Fraudulent, and the Usurious. Dante explains why the carnal and other sinners are not brought to punishment in the flaming city of Dis.

High on a bank's extremest verge we stood, 1
Girt by huge stones that formed a fence around,
Whence greater agony beneath we viewed.
And here to such excess was prevalent
The fume which rose from the abyss profound,
That we withdrew behind a monument,
Whose lid gave shelter, and whereon I read 7
Inscribed: "Pope Anastasius I contain,
Whom from the path direct Photinus led."
"Now it behoves us slowly to descend,
That by degrees our sense we may constrain
To bear the stench, that will no more offend."
Thus spake my guide. "Lest time be idly spent, 13
Do thou," I said, "some compensation find."
"On that," he answered, "are my thoughts intent.
"My Son," he added, "this for truth receive;
Within such rocks as these, three circles wind,
Of gradual rise, like those which now we leave.
Filled with accursed spirits are they all; 19
But that the sight of them may hence suffice,
Hear how and why they languish in such thrall.
Of every malice that gives God offence,
The aim is injury; and all such vice
Works others woe by fraud or violence.

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9. Fotin was a priest of Thessaly, at the end of the fifth century, who held heretical opinions as to the Trinity. Whatever doubts exist as to this Anastasius, it is evident Dante considered that even a Pope might be guilty of heresy.

But as deceit is man's peculiar stain,
God hates it most; hence those who practise it
Are placed below, and racked by greater pain.
With those to violence prone this space abounds;
But since its kinds are threefold, it is fit
The circle be disposed in triple rounds.
Against our God—ourselves—our neighbours—force
Is exercised; 'gainst them and what belongs
To them I mean, as shall be proved in course.
By force and painful wounds may death be brought
Upon our neighbour, and may grievous wrongs
By fire and rapine on his goods be wrought.
Hence homicides, and all with violent hands,
Spoilers and robbers, each in the first round
Their torment find, arranged in various bands.
Against himself man may be violent,
And his possessions; for this cause are found
Within the second circle, penitent
In vain, all those who their own life destroy,
And waste the substance for their use supplied;—
Grieving, where all was given them to enjoy.
Force towards the Godhead may be exercised,
When He is cursed and in the heart denied,
And Nature and her goodness lightly prized.
Wherefore the lesser circle sets its seal
On Sodom and on Cahors, and on each
Who for his Maker doth no reverence feel.
Fraud—whence to every breast remorse ensues—
Man uses, when he tries to over-reach
Or him who trusteth, or doth trust refuse.
This latter mode appears to cut in twain
The bond of social love which nature ties;
Whence to the second circle appertain
Witchcraft, hypocrisy, and flattery,
Falsehood, with secret theft, and simonies;
With panders, swindlers, and such infamy.
The other mode breaks nature's bond of love,
As well as that, which, added unto this,
The source of special confidence doth prove.
Hence in the minor circle (where is placed

50. Cahors, a city famous for usurers.

The centre of the world and seat of Dis)
Each traitor is for ever doomed to waste."
Then I replied: "Thy argument is clear,
And excellently suited to explain
This gulf profound, and all in torment here.
But tell me,—those within the muddy marsh—
Those driven by wind—those beaten down by rain—
And those who meeting use such language harsh—
Tell me,—within the city fraught with fire
If God is wroth, why not consumed are they?
Or else, why are they in such penance dire?"
"Wherefore from its accustomed seat," he said,
"Wanders thy intellect so far astray?
Or to what other object hath it fled?
Dost thou forget thine Ethics, where is given
A treatise on the crimes that cause offence
More than all others to the King of Heaven,—
Incontinence—and all indecency—
With malice foul?—and how incontinence
Is less offensive to the Deity?
If thou considerest this sentence well,
And duly callest to thy memory
Those who without, in deep repentance dwell,
Soon wilt thou see why from these shades malign
They are removed; and why a less degree
Of penance heavenly Justice doth assign."
O Sun, that healest all distempered sight,
Such joy I feel when clouds thou hast dispersed,
That doubt, no less than knowledge, gives delight!
"Turn thee," I said, "a little back again
To where the usurer dwells in place accurst;
And why he God offendeth, now explain."
"To him," he said, "who rightly marks the sense,
Philosophy not once alone hath told
How clearly, from Divine Intelligence,
Nature the knowledge of her course doth learn;
And thou wilt find, ere seeking many a fold,

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65. See canto xxxiv. 20. 70. "Those within the muddy marsh" are the wrathful, canto viii. "Those driven by wind," the lascivious, canto v. "Those beaten by the rain," the gluttons, canto vi. "Those who abuse each other—the avaricious and prodigal," canto vii. 73. The city of Dis. 79. Aristotle, Ethics, vii. 1. 98. Aristotle.

(If to thy physical discourse thou turn,)
That as the youth obeys his master's nod,
Even so is Nature's path by Art pursued:
Thus Art is second in descent from God.
These two, if Genesis thou call to mind,
Will show how man with wisdom is imbued,
And teach him how to benefit his kind.
But since the usurer takes another part,
Nature both in herself doth he despise,
And in her follower,—elsewhere fixt his heart.
But now behoves us to proceed again,
For o'er the horizon bright the Pisces rise:
High over Caurus resteth all the Wain;
And distant still our downward journey lies.

CANTO XII.

ARGUMENT.

Dante descends into the seventh circle, guarded by the Minotaur, where the Violent are punished in a river of blood. Centaurs oppose the progress of the poets across it, but are appeased by Virgil, who prevails upon Chiron, their chief, to direct Nessus to shew them the ford, and carry Dante over.

ROUGH was the stair we came to; and there lay
Upon the brink such object terrible
As every eye would shudder to survey.
Like to the cliff, which, or by earthquake riven,
Or wanting prop, on this side Trento fell
Into the Adige, with such ruin driven,
That from the summit of the mountain, down
E'en to the plain, might scarce be found a way
For travellers standing on that rocky crown;
So rough and rugged was this broken stair:
And on the precipice's margin lay
The infamy of Crete, extended there,
Who in the fictious heifer was conceived;

106. *i. e.* If you consider that God, in the Book of Genesis, enjoins man to work for his daily bread." 110. This is the solution of the question, line 96. 114. Caurus is the north-west wind: Charles's Wain—the constellation Bootes, or the Great Bear.

2. Upon the margin which surrounds the circle lay the Minotaur, or "infamy of Crete." See line 12. 13. The word "fictious" is used by Prior.

And seeing us, he bit himself in spleen,
Like one whose breast with inward rage is heaved.
Him in these words my sapient guide addressed:
"The Duke of Athens here thou thinkest, I ween,
Who erst on earth thy violence laid to rest:
Begone foul beast—for he before thy sight
Doth to thy sister no instruction owe,
But hither wends to view thy wretched plight."
Even as a bull springs up in wild despair
The instant he receives the mortal blow,—
Nor yet moves on, but staggers here and there;
So did the Minotaur impetuous leap.
My guide aware, cried: "To the pass retreat;
And while he storms, do thou descend the steep."
Thus we proceeded down the rocks that lay
In broken fragments, and beneath my feet
At such unwonted burden oft gave way.
Musing I went; then said he: "Haply thou
Art pondering on the steep and rugged road,
Guarded by that brute fury vanquished now.
Know, that when heretofore I made descent
Down to dark Pluto's more profound abode,
This rock was not from its foundation rent.
It fell, if right I judge, but just before
His coming dread, who from the round above,
Despoiling Dis, the mighty plunder bore;
Then through each part the infernal valley heaved
With such commotion, I suppose with love
The universe was seized, which, 'tis believed,
Hath oftentimes to chaos turned the world:
Then was this aged rock with that turmoil,
Both here and elsewhere, into ruins hurled.
But look where through the vale beneath doth run
Yon stream of blood, in which those spirits boil

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20. By the instructions of Ariadne, the sister of the Minotaur, Theseus was enabled to destroy him, and escape from the labyrinth. 38. See Canto iv. line 33. Our Saviour, according to Dante, when he arose from Hades, carried with him the souls of the Patriarchs. 41. It was believed by Empedocles that the elements of the world were animate, and at certain periods were affected with love towards each other, while at other times they produced a chaos. 45. "And the earth did quake and the rocks rent." Matt. xxvii. 51.

Who harm to others have by violence done."
O blind desire! O foolish wrath, that so
Dost spur us onward in our short-lived race,
And then for ever plungest us in woe!
An ample trench before me I descried,
Curved, as though all the plain it would embrace,—
Thus answering the description of my guide.
Betwixt the bank and it (a narrow space)
Ran Centaurs, one by one, with shafts in hand,
As erst on earth they issued to the chase.
Perceiving us, they all their course restrained,
While three advanced, dividing from the band,
With bows and winged arrows first obtained.
And one cried from afar: "Ye who descend—
What penance come ye hither to receive?
Tell me,—but stir not, or the bow I bend."
My master said: "The answer you desire,
From whence we are, to Chiron will we give:
Your mind was ever ready to take fire."
Then touching me:—"See Nessus there below,
Who for the fair Deianira died,
And in his death took vengeance on his foe.
He in the centre, looking on his breast,
Is Chiron, of Achilles' youth the guide;
The other Pholus, by deep wrath possessed.
Thousands by thousands round the foss they flit,
And dart their arrows at each soul they watch
Emerging higher than his crimes admit."
When to those rapid beasts we nearer drew,
Chiron an arrow took, and with the notch
His shaggy beard behind the cheekbone threw;
And, opening his enormous mouth anon,
"Are ye aware," his comrades he addressed,
"That he behind moves what he treads upon?
Not this the case, I ween, with spirit's feet."
Then said my faithful guide (who at his breast
Was standing now, where both the natures meet):

69. On Hercules by the envenomed robe. 71. Chiron is designated by Euripides as a most pious man (Iph. in Aul. 926); but is placed by Dante in hell as being the tutor of Achilles, whose anger he is supposed to have encouraged. 84. i. e. Whence the form of the horse was joined to that of a man, which is the reported figure of the Centaur.

ENCOUNTER WITH THE CENTAURS



WHILE THREE ADVANCED DIVIDING FROM THE BAND
WITH BOWS AND WINGED ARROWS FIRST OBTAINED v. 14

"He lives indeed, but in such lonely plight, 85
I needs must lead him through the valley blind;
Necessity compels him—not delight.
She ceased awhile her hallowed songs on high,
Who to my care this new employ consigned:
No robber he—no felon soul am I.
But by that virtue, at whose high command 91
I make my journey o'er so rough a track—
Assign, I pray thee, one from out thy band
To show the ford across this bloody tide,
And carry o'er my comrade on his back:—
No spirit he upon the air to ride."
Then Chiron wheeling round upon the right 97
Exclaimed to Nessus: "Turn and lead them o'er;
And any who molest them put to flight."
Led by the trusty guide, we took our way
Beside that purple stream; whence rent the shore
Their cries who in the boiling current lay.
Here shades immersed up to the eyebrow stood. 103
"These," said the mighty Centaur, "tyrants were,
Who gave themselves to plunder and to blood.
Here they bewail the cruelty they wrought;
Here Alexander,—Dionysius there,
Who on Sicilia years of sorrow brought.
That forehead covered with so black a hair 109
Is Ezzelino; and that other shade
Obizzo d'Este, with flaxen locks and fair,
Whom (truth to say) his cruel step-son slew."
Then to the bard I turned, and thus he said:
"Let him go first to guide us—I pursue."
A little way beyond, the Centaur stood, 115
Viewing a tribe, who, downward from the throat
Were wholly sunk within the boiling flood.
He pointed to a lonely spirit aside,

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90. *i. e.* He is not come, like Theseus and Hercules to carry any one away from hell by violence. 94. Virgil alludes to Nessus, who is presently appointed to the office he had been accustomed to. "Nessus adit, membrisque valens, scitusque vadorum." Ovid. Met. ix. 108. 110. Ezzelino da Romano, Tyrant of Verona. His government was the most cruel and sanguinary ever heard of. See Villani vi. 72, and Hallam, Middle Ages, chap. iii. pt. 1. 111. Having assigned to punishment a violent Ghibelline tyrant, Dante now adds a Guelph of the

Exclaiming: " He in God's own bosom smote
The heart still worship'd over Thames's tide."
There saw I people who the head displayed, 121
And chest above the stream; and, as I passed
I called to recollection many a shade.
Then by degrees more shallow was the blood,
So that it merely reached the feet at last;
And here we went across the gory flood.
" As you may see, on this side of the strand 127
The boiling torrent shallower ever grows,"
The Centaur said,—" so on the other hand
Deeper and deeper sinks (my words believe)
The bubbling stream, until again it flows
Where Tyrants their appointed doom receive.
Justice Divine pours forth its vengeance here 133
On Attila—earth's scourge; on Pyrrhus too;
On Sextus; and extracteth many a tear
By that hot boiling rivulet distilled
From Rinier Pazzo and Corneto, who
The public roads with devastation filled."
Then back he turned, and crossed the ford anew. 139

CANTO XIII.

ARGUMENT.

Dante enters the second compartment of the seventh circle; where those who have committed suicide are changed into stunted trees, on which the obscene Harpies sit wailing. He converses with Pietro della Vigne, the famous Chancellor of Frederic II.

The further bank had Nessus scarcely gained, 1
When we began our journey through a wood,
Which not a trace of any path contained.
No verdant leaves, but of a dusky hue;
No polished boughs, but knotted, coarse, and rude;
No fruits were there, but thorns with poison grew:

---

same character.—Obizzo was Marquis of Ferrara, said to have been suffocated by his son, who is hence called " a step-son." 119. In the year 1270 Guy de Montfort, son of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, in the city of Viterbo, during mass and the elevation of the host, stabbed Henry, the nephew of Henry III. King of England, in revenge for the death of his father. Villani says " that the heart of Henry in a golden cup was placed on a pillar at London bridge, for a memorial to the English of the said outrage." (Cron. vii. 39.)

Nor by the beasts that spurn the cultured ground, 7
Are stocks so rugged, or such tangled trees
Betwixt Cecina and Corneto found.
Here the foul Harpies build their nests, by whom
The Trojans were expelled the Strophades,
With mournful augury of ills to come.
Broad wings, a human neck and face they bear, 13
Clawed feet, and feathered paunch: with rueful sound,
Perched in the dismal trees, they fill the air.
"Ere further thou proceed," exclaimed my guide,
"Know, we have entered on the second round,
And in it still are destined to abide,
Till we arrive within the sandy plain. 19
Wherefore observe;—for things will meet thine eye,
Whence confirmation will my words obtain."
Now lamentation from each side resounded,
But none who thus bewailed could I descry;
Whereat I stayed my footsteps, all confounded.
I do believe he fancied that I thought 25
These numerous cries were from the thicket sent
By some who from our view concealment sought:
Wherefore the master said: "Let but a shoot
From any of these trees by thee be rent,
It will at once thy present thoughts confute."
Then, stretching out my hand a little space, 31
I plucked a branchlet from a thorny tree,
Whose trunk exclaimed, "Why thus my form deface?"
When o'er its leaves the blood began to roll,
Again it cried: "Why lay fierce hands on me?
Dwells not a spark of pity in thy soul?
Once were we men,—now stunted trees behold: 37
Thy hand to pity well might have inclined,
Did this rough bark the souls of snakes enfold."
Like to a sapling, lighted at one end,
Which at the other hisses with the wind,
And drops of sap doth from the outlet send;
So from the broken twig, both words and blood 43
Flowed forth;—whereat I dropped it on the ground;
And like a man o'erwhelmed by terror stood.

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9. A wild marshy tract between these two rivers in the neighbourhood of Leghorn. 19. See canto xiv. 13. 21. *i. e.* "My account of Polydorus," Æn. iii. 21. The reading adopted is "daran."

"Had he been able to believe before,
O injured soul!" exclaimed the sage profound,
"What in my verses he hath seen of yore,
He would not thus thy suffering branch have torn; 49
But so incredible it seemed, that I
Advised him to the deed which now I mourn.
Now tell me who thou art, and what thy name;
That he, returning to the world on high,
As some amends, may renovate thy fame."
The trunk replied: "So winning sweet thy tongue, 55
I needs must speak;—nor let it anger thee,
If I should haply my discourse prolong.
Know—I am he, who held the double keys
Of Frederick's heart, at pleasure turned by me,
Or locking or unlocking with such ease,
That no one else his confidence enjoyed: 61
My office high so well did I sustain,
E'en sleep was banished, life itself destroyed.
The harlot who ne'er turned her wanton eye
From Cæsar's dwelling—that accursed bane,
That vice which courts continually supply,—
Inflamed all hearts against me; and these so 67
Inflamed Augustus, by foul Envy taught,
That my glad honours were exchanged for woe.
Indignant, and high swelling with disgust,
Escape in death from obloquy I sought;—
Though just to others, to myself unjust.
Now by these fresh and tender roots I swear, 73
I never broke the faith I owed my lord,
Who merited so well the fame he bare.
And if you e'er regain the light of heaven,
Let honour to my memory be restored,

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48. *Viz.* The effect before alluded to of plucking branches from the tree into which Polydorus was turned. Æn. iii. 27. 58. Pietro della Vigne, Chancellor to the Emperor Frederick II. Born at Capua of humble parents, he begged his way to Bologna, studied there successfully, attracted the notice of the Emperor, and was promoted to the highest offices. By his advice, laws were improved, universities founded, and poetry encouraged. At last he fell a victim to the calumny of courtiers; and indignant at a charge of treachery, destroyed himself in 1246. 64. Envy. See line 78. 65. Frederick II.—so called, as heir of the Cæsars—and hence called Augustus, line 68. 75. Frederick II. See canto x. 119

Still suffering from the blow by envy given."
The poet waited till his speech was o'er,
And then addressed me: "Let not time be lost,
But speak—and if it please thee, ask him more."
Whereat I said, "Entreat him to impart
What thou believ'st will satisfy me most;
I cannot speak:—such pity fills my heart."
He then resumed: "E'en to the utmost may
This man fulfil the object of thy prayer,
Imprisoned soul! as thou be pleased to say
How in these knots the soul can be detained;
And whether from such limbs as now ye wear
Hath haply any one deliverance gained?"
The trunk, thus questioned, violently blew;
And then to speech like this the breathing changed:
"The words I give in answer shall be few.
When the fierce soul doth from the body bound,
By self inflicted violence estranged,
Minos assigns it to this seventh round.
Within the wood it falls, and taketh root
Wherever chance the hapless soul impel,
And there, like to a grain of spelt, doth shoot.
A sapling grown, its boughs are higher sent,
Till, feeding on its leaves, the harpies fell
Give to the anguish that they cause, a vent.
Like others, we shall seek our mortal clay;
But none again their bodies may resume;
(Man merits not the boon he throws away):
For we shall drag them to this mournful glade;
Here to be hung around will be our doom—
Each on the thorn of his tormented shade."
Still near the trunk we stood—attention bound,
Believing it might wish to speak again,
When we were startled by a sudden sound,—
E'en like to one, who, at his station armed,
Knows the wild boar is near, and hunter train,
By crash of boughs, and sound of beasts alarmed.
Lo! straightway on the left appeared in view
Two, torn and naked, who so swiftly fled,

86. Dante. 103. *i. e.* Like the other souls, we shall go for our bodies at the judgment; but, being suicides, we shall not be allowed to re-invest ourselves with them.

That each opposing bough was broken through.
"Now haste thee, haste thee, Death!" the foremost cried,
The other, who was somewhat lagging, said:
"O Lano, not so hasty was thy stride,
When erst at Toppo's joust thou wert undone."
Into a bush then rushed he, as forespent,
So that the bush and he appeared but one.
Behind them in the wood was seen a train
Of black and nimble dogs, on blood intent,
Like greyhounds starting from their loosened chain.
On him, who crouching in the brushwood lay,
They fixed their teeth; and having piecemeal rent,
Carried the miserable limbs away.
Me by the hand the faithful leader bore,
And guided to the tree, which vainly sent
Unceasing tears from many a bleeding pore.
"O James of St. Andrèa!" was its cry,
Of what avail to make a screen of me?
In thy unhallowed life what part had I?"
My guide exclaimed, when nearer him we stood:
"Say who wast thou, who breathest, as I see,
From out so many pores, words mixed with blood?"
"O spirits, who are come, he answer made,
"The shameful desolation to behold
Which strips the leaves that late my form arrayed;
Collect them to the foot of this sad tree.
Mine was that city which exchanged of old
For John the Baptist her first Patron:—he
Will always use his means to work her ill:
And did not Arno's ancient bridge afford
An image of him to the passer still,
Those citizens, who reared her walls again

118. Lano, a Siennese gentleman, who having squandered his fortune, rushed desperately into the midst of the enemy, in the battle fought at Toppo, near Arezzo. Knowing he should be overtaken by the dogs, he cried out for death to come to his rescue. 119. Jacopo St. Andrea, (see line 133), a Paduan, who ruined himself by extravagance. 121. He is enraged at the greater speed of Lano, and taunts him with supposed cowardice in the battle, not aware, it seems, that he had died voluntarily. 146 Near the bridge over the Arno was anciently a statue of Mars. John the Baptist having been substituted for this their first protector, a prophecy was current that Mars would avenge himself, unless the statue was restored.

On ashes left by Attila abhorred,
Their mighty labours had bestowed in vain.—
From mine own roof I swung the fatal cord." 151

CANTO XIV.

ARGUMENT.

Dante enters upon the third division of the seventh circle—a plain of burning sand, in which are punished those who have committed violence against God. A slow shower of fire is falling upon them. Capaneus is seen, tormented, but unsubdued.

LOVE for my native country gaining force—
I gathered up the leaves before us strown,
And gave them back to him, who now was hoarse.
Then came we to a boundary, which parts
The third and second circles, where are shown
The racks of Justice, and her dreadful arts.
These novel things to make more manifest, 7
Know that we reached a wide and desert ground,
That spurns each plant from its ungenial breast:
This plain is compassed by the mournful wood,
And that encircled by the foss profound:
Here on the very edge of both we stood.
Before us lay a thick and arid sand, 13
Resembling in appearance that of old
Trodden by Cato and his martial band.
O heavenly Vengeance! how shouldest thou be feared
By every one who reads what I unfold,
As to mine eyes distinctly it appeared.
Of naked spirits many a flock I saw, 19
Who all most wretchedly bewailed their fate;
And each seemed governed by a different law.
Some lay supine upon the heated plain;
And some, their limbs all drawn together, sate;
While others never ceased to pace amain.
More numerous far were those who moved around, 25
Fewer, who prostrate met their weight of ill;

149. Villani says it was Totila who destroyed Florence.

1. Dante complies with the request of his countryman in the last canto, line 141, who is said to be "hoarse," as being choked with blood.

15. The Libyan desert, over which Cato conducted the remains of Pompey's army. See Lucan ix. 382.

But their lament burst forth with louder sound.
O'er all the sandy desert fell below
Large flakes of fire, as when on Alpine hill,
While sleep the winds, are falling flakes of snow.
As Alexander in the glowing lands
Of Eastern Ind, saw solid balls of fire
Descend in showers upon his warrior bands;
And ordered straight, with provident command,
That each should trample on the vapours dire,
Lest they unite and spread o'er all the sand;—
Fell thus eternally the fiery rain;
Whence, like to tinder under flint and steel
The soil ignited to augment their pain.
In ceaseless motion and perpetual play
Their wretched hands on either side they wheel,
The still descending flames to drive away.
Then I: "O Master, thou who vanquishest
All foes, except the demons I descried
Fierce at the gate our entrance to contest—
What giant that—on whom the fire flakes fall
As if he recked not;—scoffing in his pride,
As though no tempest could his soul appal?"
Lo, at my words he raised his voice on high,
(For that of him I spake he knew full well,)
"Such as in life I was, in death am I.
Though angry Jove his hardy workmen tire,
From whom, that fatal day whereon I fell,
He took the bolt that pierced me in his ire;
Or though the rest he at the forge upbraid
In Mongibello, wearied all in turn,—
Exclaiming: 'Haste thee; —aid! good Vulcan, aid!'
As once he cried in the Phlegræan fight;—
And though his fiercest shafts my bosom burn,
From sweet revenge he ne'er shall reap delight."
With greater vehemence then spake my guide
Than hitherto had e'er been heard by me:
"O Capaneus, in that thy impious pride
Thou dost not quench, more pangs doth Heaven assign;
For, save thy rage, no punishment could be

46. Capaneus, the model of Milton's Satan. 56. Ætna, where Vulcan and the Cyclops forged Jupiter's thunderbolts

Fit retribution for a wrath like thine."
Turning to me, a milder look he gave;— 67
"Lo one," he cried, "of those seven kings, who erst
Beleaguer'd Thebes; and had, and seems to have,
Little respect for his Almighty Lord;
But, as I told him—his own rage accurst
Is to his bosom a deserved reward.
Now come behind me, and beware," he said, 73
"Thy feet thou set not on the burning sand,
But close along the forest ever tread."
Silent we came to where a little rill,
Gushing from out the wood, runs through the land,
So red—its waters make me shudder still:
Even as the stream from Bulicame, divided 79
Among the sinners, doth its course pursue,—
So through the arid sand this river glided.
Its bed and sloping sides along the way
Were petrified, and both the margins too,
Whereon I straight perceived our passage lay.
"'Mid all the wonders which have been descried, 85
Since at that gate we made an entrance first,
Whose gloomy threshold is to none denied—
Nothing within these regions hast thou found
So worth observance as this stream accurst,
Whose vapours quench the flames that fall around."
These words concluded—I besought my guide 91
That as he had awaked desire to eat,
My hunger might with food be satisfied.
"An isle there is encircled by the sea—
Ruined and waste," he said; "its name is Crete;
Under whose king once flourished Chastity.
A mountain rises in that ancient land, 97
Named Ida, joyful erst with woods and streams;—
Deserted now—like some forbidden strand.
This for the secret cradle of her child
Chose Rhea, who, to drown the infant's screams,
Made all the air resound with clamours wild.

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79. A warm spring near Viterbo, said to have been carried into the houses of some licentious women there. 86. The gate of hell, canto iii. 93. *i. e.* With an account of this celebrated stream. 101. Rhea, wife of Saturn, concealed her son Jupiter in mount Ida, and by the noise of cymbals drowned his cries from his father.

A huge old man stands in the mount upright,
Who holds his back to Damietta turned;
Rome, as a mirror, is before his sight.
His head is wrought of finely-tempered gold;
The arms and breast of silver are discerned;
Down to the hips, of brass is formed the mould:
Of steel thence downward is he made throughout,
Save the right foot, on which his weight he bears;
And that is wrought of clay;—all parts about
His form, except the gold, are sorely rent;
And from the fissure gush forth copious tears,
Which, here collected, through the cave find vent.
These flowing downward, broken rocks among,
Form Acheron, and Styx, and Phlegethon;
Whence in this strait canal they pass along,
Till, at the bottom of the infernal pit,
They form Cocytus' lake: but that anon
Thou shalt behold;—I need not speak of it."
Him I addressed; "The present stream accurst—
If from our world above it floweth, say
Why at this nether ridge appears it first."
He answered me: "Thou knowest the place is round;
And though full long hath hither been thy way,
(Still on the left descending the profound)
Not yet throughout the circle hast thou been;
Wherefore if novel thing to thee be shown,
No need that wonder on thy looks be seen."
"Lethe and Phlegethon," again I cried,
"Tell where they are; since one you name not, one
Is, as you tell me, by this rain supplied?"
He answered me: "Thy questions please me well;
But as to one—the red and boiling wave
Might surely of itself thy doubts dispel:
Lethe beyond this foss thou shalt survey,
There, where the shades resort, their forms to lave,

103. This ideal statue of Time, or Saturn, is placed within Mount Ida, in Crete, where the golden age is feigned by the poets to have commenced under his reign. Its back is turned towards Damietta, in Egypt, as the seat of the ancient superstitions; the face is directed to Rome, as the seat of the modern. See *Daniel's Image*, cap. ii. 32. 113. The tears are the vices and impurities of many ages, which supply the infernal rivers. 132. See line 113.

When penitence hath washed their sins away.
Now is it time," he said, "the wood to quit; 139
Close in my rear do thou direct thy feet:
Unscathed by fire the banks a road permit,
For over them is quenched the fiery heat."

CANTO XV.

ARGUMENT.

Dante recognizes his former preceptor Brunetto Latini, to whom he expresses his gratitude. Brunetto characterizes the Florentines, and intimates to Dante the evils he may expect.

Our road on one of those firm margins lay, 1
Protected from the fire by clouds of mist,
Which, o'er the water rising, fell in spray.
E'en such embankments as the Flemings rear,
The flood's impetuous progress to resist,
'Twixt Ghent and Bruges, where its rage they fear;
And such as, to protect from Brenta's might 7
Their villas, Padua's citizens devise,
Ere melts the snow on Chiarentana's height;—
Embankments such as those were here displayed;
But not so lofty, or so vast in size,
Whoe'er their builder was, these piers were made.
So far behind us had we left the wood, 13
That, had I turned me round, in vain had been
The endeavour to behold it whence we stood,—
When on the margin by the river's side
A band of souls we met, whose prying eyne
Scanned us, as men are wont at eventide
Neath the young moon to scan each passer by; 19
And towards us straight their brows they sharpened up,
Like an old tailor at his needle's eye.
My features, thus so stedfastly surveyed,
Were recognized by one of this strange troop,
Who seized my skirt, and, "Oh! how wondrous!" said.
When forth he stretched his arm, my looks were bent
So earnestly upon his scorched brow, 26
That e'en his shrivelled face could not prevent
My recollection of him full and clear:

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9. A part of the Alps, whence the Brenta derives its source. 24. He expresses his astonishment at seeing Dante alive.

Then downward to his face my own I bow,
Exclaiming: "Ser Brunetto, art thou here?"
He answered me: "My son, if thou approve, 31
Brunetto will some little space with thee
Turn back, while onward his companions move."
"Turn, I implore,—and with thee," I replied,
"I'll sit me down, if so thy pleasure be,
And it offend not this my faithful guide."
"Who of this flock but for a moment rests, 37
Here lies a hundred years, my son," said he—
"No fan to cool him when the fire molests.
Wherefore proceed—I at thy skirt will go,
And afterwards rejoin my company,
Who, journeying on, bewail their endless woe."
I dared not venture down, that I might tread 43
On the same level; but inclined mine ear,
Like one who reverently bows his head.
"What fortune, or what destiny," he cried,
"Before the final day hath brought thee here;
And who is this that deigns thy path to guide?"
I answered him: "In yon high world serene 49
Bewildered in a vale I went astray,
Ere yet matured my intellect had been:
Nor left till yestermorn its fatal gloom;
But thither was I tracing back my way,
When he appeared who reconducts me home."
"A glorious haven surely shall be thine, 55
So thou pursue thy star," he answered me,
"If right I judged when that sweet life was mine.
And had not death full early closed mine eyes,—
Seeing that heaven was so benign to thee,
I would have aided thy sublime emprize.
But that ungrateful and malignant race, 61
Who erst came down from lofty Fiesole,
And of their mountain flint still bear the trace,—

30. Brunetto Latini was Dante's preceptor, and wrote a work called Il Tesoro: see line 119. **50.** This is the valley of sin, or dark wood of the first canto. Dante's errors and his rescue by Beatrice are related in Purg. xxx. 115, &c. **56.** See Par. xxii. 112. **62.** Florence, originally founded by the Romans, received an accession of inhabitants from Fiesole, one of the twelve Etrurian cities, when several families for commercial purposes settled in the valley.

Shall for thy very virtues prove thy foe:
And meet it is that ye should disagree;
Since not with crabs the pleasant fig may grow.
In olden time they were reported blind; 67
Covetous, proud, and envious as they are;
From their depravity cleanse thou thy mind.
Renown so high hath fate in store for thee,
Each side shall hunger after thee;—but far
From the goat's browsing let the sweet herb be.
Then let them tread each other under foot— 73
The beasts of Fiesole,—nor dare to touch
The plant, if any 'mid their filth still shoot,
Whence may the hallowed seed of Rome revive,
In Florence left, when she was rendered such
A nest for base malignity to thrive."
"Had full accordance to my prayers been given," 79
I answered, "you had not been dwelling here,
From intercourse with human nature driven:
For still, deep fixed within my memory,
Lives your paternal image, good and dear,
As when from day to day you counselled me
How man may best immortalize his name: 85
My gratitude, while yet I breathe the air,
'Tis meet I show, and with my voice proclaim.
What you have told me of my days to come
I treasure up, to be explained by Her,
If e'er I reach her, who will know my doom.
But upon these my words of truth rely;— 91
If in my breast no secret sting I feel,
Let Fortune do her worst—prepared am I:
Not new to me this prophecy of woe:
Then at her will let Fortune turn her wheel,
As turns the peasant his accustomed hoe."
Now to the right my master bent with speed, 97
And on mine ear his warning accents fell:
"He listens to good purpose who takes heed."
Not that I ceased discoursing as I went

66. The allusion is to the Romans in contrast with the Fiesolans. See line 97. 71. *i. e.* The Bianchi and Neri. 77. When the Fiesolans emigrated there. 90. Beatrice. See canto x. 130, relating to Dante's exile. 99. An allusion to Æn. v 710 "Suoeranda omnis fortuna ferendo

With Ser Brunetto, asking him to tell
Which of his comrades were most eminent.
"The histories of some I may relate
Others," he said, "'twere better not to name;
Time would be wanting for a theme so great.
Know briefly—all were priests, and in their time
Great Literati, not unknown to fame,
On earth polluted with the self-same crime.
Priscian proceeds with that accursed crew,
Accorso too:—him also mayst thou see,
(If anxious such impurity to view,)
Who by the Servant's Servant was translated,
From Arno unto Bacchiglion, where he
His sinews left, with their employment sated.
More would I say, but here must close our speech;
And now we two must part, for I perceive
Fresh dust arising from the sandy beach:
Spirits approach with whom I may not be;
My treasure I commend, in which I live—
No other favour do I ask of thee."
Then back he turned, and one of those he seemed
Who at Verona in the race essay
To gain the mantle green; and might be deemed
Not he who loses, but who wins the day.

CANTO XVI.

ARGUMENT.

Dante converses with several distinguished Florentines—Guidoguerra—Tegghiaio Aldobrandi—Jacopo Rusticucci. They inquire after the state of Florence. Dante takes off his girdle, and gives it to Virgil, who throws it down into the abyss of the eighth circle. A horrible monster presently appears.

Now came I where I heard the loud rebound
Of waters tumbling to the pit below;
And like the hum of bee-hive was the sound.
When lo, forth issuing from a numerous crew,

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est." 110. The famous lawyer. 112. The Pope, who calls himself "Servant of servants."—He translated Andrea de' Mozzi, Bishop of Florence, on account of his scandalous life to Vicenza, through which runs the Bacchiglione. 119. See note, line 30.

1. The roar of Phlegethon falling into the eighth circle.

That passed beneath the red shower's pungent flow,
Three spirits running rapidly I view.
Towards us they came, and all at once cried: "Stand—
Thou, whom I judge to be, from thine attire,
A native of our own degraded land."
Ah me! what scars upon their limbs I viewed,
Recent, and old, deep branded by the fire!
My grief is at the very thought renewed.
Hearing their cry, the teacher turned to me,
Exclaiming: "Let thy foot awhile be stayed;
For to these souls is due some courtesy;
And did the nature of the place permit,
Which hurls such fiery darts,—I should have said
That haste would rather thee than them befit."
Then as we paused, they all their old lament
Began again; and when to us they came,
All three a circle formed, and round they went.
As champions stript, anointed for the fight,
Their hold and vantage scan with careful aim,
Ere they with blows together try their might;
Thus wheeling round, did each to me his look
Direct, so that the neck and foot the while
A contrary direction ever took.
"And if," said one, "this wretched place forlorn,
And our scorched faces, sorrowful and vile,
Bring on ourselves and on our prayers thy scorn,—
Still let our fame incline thy soul to tell
Who thou mayst be, that thus with living feet
Securely glidest o'er the paths of hell.
He in whose track I tread, though now he be
All naked and deprived of skin, had yet
Far higher rank than would be deemed by thee —
Hight Guidoguerra,—grandson of the good
Gualdrada, who achieved a glorious fame
By deeds of wisdom and of hardihood.
The other, who behind me beats the sand,
Is Tegghiaio Aldobrandi, whose great name

18. They were distinguished men—the same concerning whom Dante had inquired of Ciacco, canto vi. 79. 38. Gualdrada was a noble Florentine lady, distinguished for her virtue and beauty, daughter of Bellincion Berti: Guidoguerra, a famous Guelf captain. 41. A noble Florentine of great military talent, of the Adimari family.—He showed

Should in the world above some praise command.
And I, who with them am in torment placed, 43
Was Rusticucci; and in truth my woe
May to my haughty wife be chiefly traced."
Could I have been protected from the fire,
I should have thrown myself 'midst them below;
Nor would my guide have thwarted my desire:
But since I dared not tempt the blasting flame, 49
My wishes to embrace them were repressed;
And fear my friendly eagerness o'ercame.
I then began: " 'Tis not disdain, but grief
For your condition which hath pierced my breast:
And from the moment of my first belief
That persons such as you were on their way, 55
(Such import did my master's words imply,)
I felt a pang, that time can scarce allay.
Your country gave me birth—your names renowned
Are ever living in my memory;
And still I love to hear your deeds resound.
I leave the gall, and now my journey wend 61
To seek the promised fruit with this my guide;
But to the centre must I first descend."
" So may the spirit animate thy frame
Through many a year to come," he then replied,
" And after death shine forth thy glorious name,
As thou inform me whether to this day 67
Valour and courtesy our city grace,
As they were wont;—or are they cast away?
For Borsieri, whom thou viewest there,
Condemned but lately to this dismal place,
Gives us much pain by what he doth declare."
" Thee, Florence, have an upstart people new, 73

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his judgment in an endeavour to dissuade the Florentines from the expedition which led to the fatal battle of Mont' Aperti. See canto x. 86, and note. Tegghiaio is pronounced as a dissyllable. See vi. 79. 44. A rich Florentine of distinction, who having an imperious wife, abandoned her, and followed wicked courses. 46. The poet here speaks. He shews his respect towards these men for their patriotism, however sullied were their lives by great vices. 61. "Bitter gall," and "sweet fruit" are Scriptural expressions to represent vice and virtue. 73. Instead of giving a direct answer to the question of Rusticucci concerning Florence, he breaks out into an apostrophe to his native city, as if she could hear his rebuke.

And sudden gains, so filled with waste and pride,
That thine excess thou dost already rue!"
Thus cried I—looking up; and they forsooth,
Who took this sentence for an answer, eyed
Each other, like to men who hear the truth.
"If at all times an answer to bestow,
With no more cost," they said, "to thee is given,
O happy thou, whose words so freely flow!
Wherefore if thou escape these realms of night,
And e'er return to see the stars of heaven,—
Then, when to say—'I was'—shall give delight,
Forget not to make mention of us there."
With this, they broke the ring; and as they fled,
Their nimble feet like pinions cut the air.
So swift they disappeared, that an Amen
Could not, I ween, more quickly have been said
The master now pursued his way again.
I followed him; and short was our career,
Before the sound of water so increased,
That one could scarcely make the other hear.
E'en as that stream, which drawing first its source
From Monte Veso, as it seeks the east,
On Apennines' left side holds separate course—
Called Acquacheta higher up, before
Its waves adown the humble valley flow,
(At Forli bearing the same name no more,)
Re-bellows o'er St. Benedict on high,
As from steep crag it headlong falls below;
Where thousands might have shelter and supply;
Thus from the summit of a broken rock
Rushed that dark stream with such tremendous din,
Our ears had soon been deafened by the shock.
Around my waist I had a girdle tied,

---

85. The anxiety of the spirits for the continuance of intercourse with the living, and the maintenance of their fame on earth pervades the poem. See vi. 89; xv. 119; xxix. 103. 92. The waters of Phlegethon. 94. He compares the fall of Phlegethon to that of the Montone, a river in Romagna, and the first, flowing from the left side of the Apennines, which takes an independent course to the sea; all the rest being tributaries to the Po. 102. This appears to be an allusion to some friars in a convent there, who were few in number and very rich. 106. Dante is believed in early life to have entered the order of St. Francis, and assumed the girdle. With this, *i. e.* with human virtue, he once had hoped

With which indeed I once had thought to win
The nimble Panther of the spotted hide:
This girdle from my waist did I unbind,
Obedient to my courteous guide's command,
And gave it to him in a knot entwined.
Then to the right he turned himself around,
And cast it over from the lofty strand
Down to the bottom of the gulf profound.
I said within me: "At this signal new,
Which thus my master watches with his eye,
Some novelty most surely will ensue."
Alas how cautious mortals ought to be
With those, who not the deed alone espy,
But by their skill the inmost thoughts can see!
"What I am waiting for, shall soon," he said,
"Rise from below, and what thou dream'st of now
Shall to thy view be presently displayed."
That truth which bears the semblance of a lie,
To pass the lips man never should allow:—
Though crime be absent—still disgrace is nigh.
But here I needs must speak; and by the rhymes,
Reader of this my Comedy, I swear,
(So may they live with fame to future times,)
That swimming up to me, a form I saw
Ascending through that gross and murky air,
Such as would fill the stoutest heart with awe—
Like one returning, who hath downward been
To loose an anchor, that fast grappling clings
To rocks, or aught beneath the waves unseen,
Who gathers in his feet and upward springs.

CANTO XVII.

ARGUMENT.

The monster Geryon, representing Fraud, is described. While Virgil is speaking to him, Dante proceeds in this third compartment to examine

to overcome the Panther. See canto i. 32. He now abandons the hope of pacifying her by any such means. Virgil throws away the girdle to Geryon, the emblem of Fraud. 108. See canto i. 42. 118. Dante was at a loss to understand Virgil's object, and betrayed an anxiety which he checks with an inward rebuke. 131. See beginning of next canto.

the fraudulent sinners and usurers who are fondly intent on their armorial bearings. On his return they both descend into the eighth circle on the back of Geryon.

"BEHOLD the beast with sharpened tail acute, 1
Who pierces mountains, wall, and armed host;
Behold the beast who doth the world pollute:"
Me in these words my faithful guide bespake;
Then beckoned him to land upon the coast,
And where the causeway ends, his station take.
Nor did Fraud's base and filthy image fail 7
To raise upon the bank his head and breast;
But on the shore he drew not forth his tail.
The features of an honest man he wore,
So outwardly benignant:—all the rest
The semblance of a wily serpent bore:
Two branching arms he had all rough with hair; 13
And either flank, his back, and ample chest,
Embossed with knots and traced with circles were.
Not richer hues, embroidered or inlaid
By Turks or Tartars, e'er adorned a vest;
Nor such the gorgeous web Arachne made.
As oft light vessels stand upon the shore— 19
Part in the water, part upon the land;—
And as, where dwells the greedy German boor,
The beaver sits, intent to watch his prey;—
So on the edge of stone that fenced the sand,
Crouching—this execrable monster lay:
High o'er the void his tail through every joint 25
He vibrated; quick curling to and fro
The scorpion fork which armed the envenomed point.
"Now," said my escort, "sideways must we bear
Our steps awhile, and on the margin go,
Towards that fell monster who is crouching there."
We then descended, bearing to the right, 31
And walked ten paces onward o'er the strand,

---

1. This beast appears from line 97 to be Geryon. He was an ancient king of Spain, a most crafty person, and is here taken as a symbol of Fraud. 10. The likeness of the beast to a man is from Daniel, where speaking of the Little Horn (generally acknowledged to mean the Papal power) he says, "In this Horn were eyes like the eyes of a man," chap. vii. 8. "to denote," says Bp. Newton, "his cunning and foresight."

To shun the flames and burning marle in sight.
Reaching the beast—a little distance thence
I view a party seated on the sand,
Near to the margin of the gulph immense.
"That by experience thou mayest fully learn,
All that this round containeth," Virgil said,
"Go—and thyself their sad estate discern;
But have a care lest thou thy speech prolong;—
I will entreat the beast to lend his aid,
And bear us down upon his shoulders strong."
Alone I thus proceeded to the place,
Still coasting the seventh circle's boundary,
Where seated I beheld this woeful race.
Grief gushing through their eyes a passage found;
And each applied his hands alternately
Against the vapour and the torrid ground,—
Like dogs—who basking in the summer's heat,
When gadflies fierce and busy gnats assail,
Now frequent ply the mouth, and now the feet.
I gazed on many of these spirits grieved,
On whom fell down the sharp and fiery hail;
But none of them I knew;—yet I perceived
That from the neck of each a purse was swung,
With certain sign and certain colour decked:
On that, it seemed, their sight with fondness hung.
And when I came among them—looking round,
I saw a lion's semblance and aspect,
Painted in azure on a yellow ground.
Extending then mine eyes amid the herd,
Another purse I saw as red as blood,
On which was wrought a goose more white than curd.
And one, upon whose satchel white a swine
Of ample size in azure colours stood,
Exclaimed: "In this abyss what part is thine?
Begone—and since of life thou art not reft,
Know that my neighbour Vitaliano here

---

54. Dante does not recognize any of them. They are all too despicable to be worthy of individual notice. 59. The arms of the Gianfigliazzi, a distinguished family of Florence. 63. The arms of the Ubbriachi. 65. The arms of the Scrovigni.—The speaker is Rinaldo Scrovigni who lived at Padua, and says that his neighbour Vitaliano, a greater usurer than himself, should shortly sit next him.

Shall speedily be seated on my left.
A Paduan amid Florentines am I;
And often—" Come the mighty cavalier,"
They thunder in my ears with deafening cry,
" Who shall a satchel with three goats disclose."
Thereat he writhed his mouth, and showed his tongue,
E'en like unto an ox that licks his nose.
I, who now feared that by my lengthened stay
He who urged haste with anger might be stung,
Back from the weary spirits took my way.
High on the haunches of the monster worm,
Already seated high I found my guide,
Who thus enjoined me: " Now be bold and firm,
Such are the stairs by which we must descend;
Mount thou in front, and I behind will ride,
Lest any mischief from the tail impend."
Like one who is threatened with an ague fit—
His nails quite blue, and he all shivering cold,—
Yet without power that gloomy shade to quit;
Such I became;—but by his threats restored,
I felt that shame which makes the servant bold,
When in the presence of a gracious lord.
High on his shoulders then I took my seat,
And would have said: " Take care and hold me fast;"
But words came not, my wishes to complete.
Then he, who oft before had lent me aid
In arduous enterprize, flung round my waist
His friendly arms—upholding me, and said:
" Now, Geryon, may you take your downward way;
Large be your circles—slow be your descent;—
Think what unusual burden you convey."
Then, as a little vessel out of port
Backs by degrees—e'en so the monster went;
And when he was at liberty to sport,
His tail he turned to where his breast had been,
And moved it, thus extended, like an eel,
While with his arms the air he gathered in.
Nor erst, I ween, existed greater fears
When Phaëton's loose car began to reel,

---

71. Giovanni Bujamonte, a most infamous usurer of Florence, whose coming they anticipated with ironical exclamations.

Whereby the heavens took fire, as still appears
Nor, when the wretched Icarus in dismay 109
Felt the wax melting and the feathers fall,
His father crying, "Dangerous is thy way"—
Than I experienced, high upborne in air—
Air all around:—how did the void appal!—
For nought except the dreaded beast was there.
Onward by slow degrees he swam; and slow— 115
Wheeling—descended, unperceived by me,
Save that a vapour fanned me from below.
Now on the right I heard the vortex dread
Roaring beneath; whereat full eagerly
I downward cast mine eye with out-stretched head.
Still more was I dismayed to view it near; 121
For flames were seen, and lamentations heard;
Wherefore I gathered up my limbs for fear:
And by the woes which burst upon my sight
From every part, now plainly first appeared
The circling motion, and our downward flight.
E'en as a falcon, long upheld in air, 127
Not seeing lure or bird upon the wing,
So that the falconer utters in despair,
"Alas, thou stoop'st!" fatigued descends from high;
And whirling quickly round in many a ring,
Far from his master sits—disdainfully;
With like disdain did Geryon place his freight 133
At foot of the disparted rock below;
Then feeling disencumbered of our weight,
Swift darted off, like arrow from a bow.

CANTO XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

Description of the eighth circle, divided into ten gulfs. This canto treats only of the two first, in which are punished Seducers and Flatterers. The first are scourged by demons; the second immersed in filth.

THERE is in hell a place, stone-built throughout, 1

108. From the accident of Phaëton, a fabulous story arose that the heavens had taken fire, and that what we call the milky way was the effect of the conflagration.



[illegible]
[illegible] EXCITE THE [illegible] BEAST WAS [illegible]

Called Malebolgë—of an iron hue,
Like to the wall that circles it about.
Full in the middle of this land of pain
Yawns a deep gulf, of ample size to view,
Whose form in proper place I will explain.
The circling boundary that remains outside, 7
'Twixt the rock's basis and the gulf profound,
Ten trenches to its lowest depth divide.
As is the form presented to the eye
By fortresses, whose massive walls around
Run numerous trenches for security;
Such was the semblance which these dykes displayed: 13
And from the threshold of such castles strong,
As bridges to the outer bank are laid;
So from this rock's low basis piers extend
That cross the moles and vallies all along,
Far as the ample gulf in which they end.
Here was it, that, released from Geryon's back, 19
We found ourselves; and then the poet drew
On towards the left, and I pursued his track.
Upon the right new miseries I discerned,
New modes of torment, and tormentors new
In the first chasm, where'er mine eyes I turned.
Naked the sinners were whom I descried; 25
Some from the middle were advancing—some
Were journeying with us, but with greater stride.
So, o'er the bridge, the concourse to convey,
Which flocks, the year of Jubilee, to Rome,
Means are devised to form a double way,—
That on the one side, all may keep in front 31
The castle, to St. Peter's as they throng,—
All on the other, journey to the Mount.
Horned fiends I saw with monstrous rods in hand
On either side, the hideous rock along,

2. Malebolgë, *i. e.* evil cells, into ten of which the eighth circle is divided. 10. "Figura" is the reading adopted. 29. In the year 1300, Pope Boniface VIII. established the Jubilee for the sale of indulgences. So great was the concourse of pilgrims to Rome to purchase them, that, in order to enable the crowds to pass and repass the bridge of St. Angelo with greater ease, it was divided lengthwise by a partition; so that on one side, all had before them the Castle of Adrian, on the other, Mount Aventine.

Who scourged severely that ill-fated band.
Ah, how they bounded up, excoriate, 37
At the first stripe! and this inspired such dread,
A second or a third none dare await.
As we pursued our way, mine eyesight fell
On one, whom seeing, instantly I said:
"Surely I know that countenance full well."
Wherefore I paused, to call him to my mind: 43
My gracious guide too, lingering on the spot,
Gave me permission to remain behind.
The suffering wretch, who thought his face to hide,
Bent down his head; but it availed him not:
"Thou—who art looking on the ground," I cried,
"Unless thy features do thy name belie, 49
Caccianimico surely must thou be:
But to such pungent sauce who bids thee hie?"
"Reluctantly," he said, "I tell my crime;
But thy clear living speech constraineth me,
Recalling to my mind the olden time.
Know I am he, by whose persuasion led, 55
Fair Ghisola obeyed the Marquis' will;
This is the truth—whatever else be said.
We Bolognese so greatly here abound,
That not 'twixt Reno and Savena's rill
So many tongues, I deem, could now be found,
Who utter Sipa in their country's phrase. 61
If proof of this, or witness thou require,
Recal to mind our avaricious ways."
Him, as he spake, a demon lashed, and cried,
"Ruffian, begone: no women here for hire."—
I hastened to rejoin my faithful guide;
Nor had we many paces onward sped, 67
Before a rugged bridge appeared in sight,
Whose arch projected from that rocky bed:
Lightly o'er this our upward steps we drew,

---

50. Venedico Caccianimico was a Bolognese, said to have been bribed to prevail on his sister Ghisola (line 56) to yield to the desires of Obizzo d'Este, Marquis of Ferrara, under the belief he intended to marry her. See canto xii. 111. 59. The city of Bologna, situated between these rivers, is distinguished by a peculiarity of dialect, in using the affirmative "Sipa" instead of "Sia" or "Si."

And, mounting its high ridges on the right,
To those eternal barriers bade adieu.

Arriving where the opening arch supplies 73
A passage to the tortured souls, my guide
Exclaimed: " Now pause awhile, and fix thine eyes
Upon the rest of this ill-fated race;
For as they have journeyed hither by our side,
Thou can'st not clearly have discerned their face."

From the old bridge we then surveyed the band 79
Which from the other coast was drawing near,
Forced onward in like manner by the brand.
To me unasked my gracious master said:
" Behold that mighty one approaching here,
Who in his grief disdains one tear to shed.

How well he yet retains the royal air! 85
Jason is this, whose skill and hardihood
The golden fleece from ancient Colchis bare:
Through Lemnos' isle he passed upon his way,
What time the inexorable females rude
Consigned their males to cruel death a prey.

There, with smooth words and winning flattery, 91
Beguiled he her who had in former time
Beguiled her fellows—young Hypsipyle.
He left the damsel pregnant and forlorn:
Such are the pangs allotted to his crime.
Here too Medea's injuries doth he mourn:

Deceivers like to him like sufferings share. 97
Thus much of the first valley, and of those
Who in this dungeon pent, such torture bear."
Now came we where the narrow causeway ran
Athwart the second mole, and thence arose
From its strong shoulders to another span.

In the next valley spirits met mine eyes, 103
Whining and snorting loud amid their woe,
Who smote themselves in lamentable guise.
The banks were crusted o'er with scum, that rose
In clouds of steam from the abyss below,
And grievously assailed the eyes and nose.

---

93. The Lemnian women having agreed to put all their males to death, Hypsipyle alone broke her promise, to save her father. She was afterwards seduced and deserted by Jason.

So deep the bottom, that to gain a sight, 109
'Twas needful o'er the bridge to clamber first,
Where the steep rock attains its utmost height.
Here we arrived; and hence a tribe I saw,
Within the pit in ordure foul immersed,
Which seemed from man its origin to draw.
And while I gazed beneath, with zeal increased, 115
One I beheld with so bedaubed a head,
I could not tell the layman from the priest.
"Wherefore art thou so greedily inclined
To look on me above the rest?" he said:
"Because," I cried, "if well I call to mind,
Thee have I seen, when erst thy hair was dry, 121
In Lucca bred, Interminei thy name;
Wherefore I scan thee with more searching eye."
Then smiting on his head, the wretch replied:
"'Twas Flattery plunged me in this place of shame,
Flattery with which I ne'er was satisfied."
Forthwith the master saith: "Now, prithee, stretch 127
A little further in advance thy brow;
So that thine eyesight may distinctly reach
The head of that vile courtesan unclean,
Who tears herself with filthy nails; and now
Is crouching down, now upright may be seen—
Thais, the harlot, who, when Thraso said, 133
'Will many thanks from thee be now my due?'
Answered, 'Oh! wondrous many.'—Having fed
Thine eyes so far, rest sated with the view."

CANTO XIX.

ARGUMENT.

Third division of the eighth circle. The Popes, who have been guilty of simony, are fixed in circular holes, with their heads down;—their legs only appearing:—the soles of their feet burnt with flames. Pope Nicholas the Third; Boniface the Eighth; and Clement the Fifth.

O Simon Magus! O ye crew abhorred, 1
His greedy followers! who for love of gold

---

133. Dante represents the dialogue as taking place between Thais and her paramour, without the intervention of the servant Gnatho.

1. See Acts viii. 18, 19, 20. Simon Magus is mentioned in the Paradiso (canto xxx. 148) as thrusting down to a lower depth Pope Boniface.

Debase the things devoted to the Lord,—
Those things which should to goodness wedded be;
For you must sound the trumpet, since ye hold
A place in this third pit of infamy!
Now to the bridge adjoining had we come, 7
And stood high o'er the arching precipice
Which spans the very centre of the tomb.
Wisdom supreme! how great thy skill, declare
The Heavens—the Earth—and Hell's profound abyss!
How just to each thy dispensations are!
The sides and bottom of the livid ground 13
I saw were full of holes; and every one
Of like circumference;—and all were round.
Not greater, or less ample seemed their size
Than those within my beautiful St. John,
So fashioned there for water, to baptize;
(One of the same I broke a few years since, 19
To save a drowning child: be this a seal
That of my motive may the world convince.)
Without each hole a sinner's feet protruded;
His legs too did the aperture reveal
Far as the calves;—the rest from sight excluded.
The soles of every one in flames were wrapt, 25
Which made the joints so forcibly to play,
That every kind of cord they would have snapt.
E'en as a flame with rapid course doth steal
O'er the smooth surface of its oily prey,—
So glided here the fire from toe to heel.
Then I: "O master! say what is his name 31
Whose quivering legs bespeak intenser pangs,
And seem the victims of a ruddier flame?"
"If thou wilt let me bear thee down below,"
He answered, "o'er yon bank which sloping hangs,
His evil deeds thou from himself shalt know."
"That pleaseth me, which pleaseth thee the best; 37

5. *i. e.* "Your crimes must be made known." "Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet." Isaiah lviii. 12. This exclamation points to the apposite punishment of those who have been all their life grovelling in pursuit of money. Dante is now looking down on the simoniacal Popes, whose heads are turned downwards. 17. The church of St. John the Baptist at Florence.—The accident mentioned by Dante had caused him to be charged with sacrilege.

Thou art my lord," I said—"thy will is mine;
To thee are known the secrets of my breast."
O'er the fourth pier we then pursued our way,
And to the left descending still incline,
Where full of holes the narrow bottom lay.
Nor did the master set me down again 43
Till we had reached that most afflicted shade,
Whose quivering ancles so betrayed his pain.
"O thou whose upper parts are thrust below,—
Fixt like a stake, most wretched soul," I said,
"Oh! if thou canst, a word on me bestow!"
Like to a friar I stood, that doth confess 49
A murderer, who, to gain a moment's space,
Calls back the priest in his extreme distress.
"What! art thou come—and upright too?" he cried,
"Art thou arrived—and upright, Boniface?
A longer life the prophecy implied.
Art sated with the wealth which made thee dare 55
To carry off with fraud and perfidy,
And then make havoc of, the Lady Fair?"
Like those who stand in wonder and dismay,
Not fully comprehending a reply,
Duped as they think—not knowing what to say;
So lost was I:—anon the poet cried: 61
"Inform him thou art not the man he named:"
I, as directed, instantly replied.
Whereat the spirit writhing with his feet,
And sighing, with a mournful voice exclaimed:
"Then tell me what thou wishest, I entreat.
If to enquire what name on earth I had, 67

49. The punishment assigned to murderers was to be buried alive topsy turvy. When so fixed, those who had before refused to listen to the friar confessor, would recall him, in order to gain a short respite from death. 53. Pope Nicholas mistakes Dante for Pope Boniface VIII. coming to succeed him, and is surprised at seeing him some years sooner than he had expected, and standing on his feet, instead of being planted downwards in his place. 57. The "Lady Fair" represents the Church, which Pope Boniface VIII. seized, when in 1294 he got himself elected Pope by a simoniacal contract with King Charles of France—whence Dante makes St. Peter call him an "Usurper of his place." Par. xxvii. 22. "After he was raised to the pontificate, Boniface manifested the two prevailing traits of his character, pride without bounds, and passion, which bordered upon fury whenever he met with opposition." Sismondi, Hist. de Repub. Ital.

Thou tookest the pains to scramble down the steep,
Know—with the mighty mantle was I clad,
And truly was descended from the Bear:—
To enrich my whelps I laid my schemes so deep,
My wealth I've stow'd above—my person here.
Beneath my head now lie, enduring woe, 73
Those who before me practised simony,
Within the stony fissure dragged below.
And I in turn shall thither likewise fall,
When he arrives, whom I took thee to be,
When I addressed thee with such sudden call.
But longer time have I been thus immersed, 79
With ruddy feet upturned, and head deprest,
Than he with glowing heels shall stand reversed.
For after him—more impious and unjust—
Shall come a lawless Shepherd from the west,
By whom still deeper shall we both be thrust.
He (like another Jason, who we read 85
In Maccabees, the royal favour won)
Shall France induce his wishes to concede."
Presumption, it might haply be, inspired
The answer which I made him in this tone:
"Say if our blessed Saviour ought required
Of money from St. Peter's hand, when he 91
The keys entrusted to him?—surely not:
He asked no more than—simply—'Follow me.'
Nor gold nor silver the Disciples took,
When on Matthias fell the destined lot

cap. 24. Villani, who is inclined to favour him, says: "He had no scruples of conscience in the acquisition of wealth, to aggrandize the Church and enrich his own relations." 70. Nicholas III. was created Pope in 1277.—He was of the Orsini family, and hence calls himself the "son of the she-bear." He enriched his family, "the little bears," by open simony. 77. See line 53. 79. Nicholas had been thus planted nineteen years, since he died in 1281, and Dante's supposed visit was made in 1300:—whereas Boniface would only have to stand there eleven years, *i. e.* from his death in 1303, to that of his successor Clement in 1314. 83. Clement came from "the west," *i. e.* from Bordeaux, whence he was translated by Philip le Bel, on condition of removing the holy see to Avignon, that it might be more under French influence. 85. See Maccabees, 2nd book, iv. As Antiochus granted the desire of Jason at the price he offered, so Clement V. obtained the popedom by conceding to the terms of Philip. 93. See St. Matthew, iv. 19. 94. "Then Peter said: Silver and gold have I none." Acts iii. 6.

To fill that place the guilty soul forsook.
Wherefore remain, for justly doomed thou art;
And treasure up the ill-earned wealth accurst,
Which against Charles so fiercely fired thy heart.
And were it not, that I am still controlled
By reverence for those mighty keys, which erst
In life's sweet season it was thine to hold,
Words more severe than these should I bestow:
Trampling the good, and raising up the bad—
Your avarice o'erwhelms the world in woe.
To you St. John referred, O Shepherds vile,
When She, who sits on many waters, had
Been seen with kings her person to defile;
(The same, who with seven heads arose on earth,
And bore ten horns, to prove that power was her's,
Long as her husband had delight in worth.)
Your Gods ye make of silver and of gold;
And wherein differ from idolaters,
Save that their God is one—your's manifold?
Ah Constantine! what evils caused to flow,
Not thy conversion, but those fair domains
Thou on the first rich Father didst bestow!"
While I reproached him thus in language keen,
And rage, or conscience added to his pains,
Quivering in air his tortured feet were seen.
My guide was pleased, when he this censure heard,
So satisfied a smile his lips expressed,
As he stood listening to my truthful word.
Wherefore both arms around my waist he threw,
And when he had upraised me to his breast,
He speedily retraced his steps anew.
Nor was he tired in holding me thus fast,
Till on the bridge's top he took his stand,
Which from the fourth to the fifth pier is cast.
Here laid he gently down his cherished load—
Gently upon that steep and rocky strand,

99. Charles I. of Sicily. See Villani viii. 54. 106. *i. e.* The Pope, who styles himself the husband of the Church, has intrigued and made alliances for sordid purposes with the kings of the earth. See Revelations, xvii. 2, 5, and canto i. 100. 112. "Covetousness is idolatry." Coloss. iii. 5. 115. See "The Spirit of Dante," prefixed. This stanza was translated by Milton.

Which e'en to goats would seem a rugged road:
Another valley then appeared at hand. 133

CANTO XX.

ARGUMENT.

In the fourth division are punished the Soothsayers, Augurs, Sorcerers, &c. Having endeavoured to pry into the future, their faces are now twisted behind, so that they are constrained to walk backwards. Amphiaraus, Tiresias, Aruns, Manto, Michael Scot, &c.

NEW sufferings must my verse proceed to tell, 1
In this the twentieth canto of my lay,
Treating of those who are immersed in hell.
Now all intent upon the verge I stood,
That the unfolded depth I might survey,
With sorrows of severest woe bedewed.
Throughout that circling valley met mine eye 7
People in tears—and silent—moving slow,
Like men on earth who chaunt the litany.
When deeper fell my sight on those within,
Wondrously twisted each appeared below,
From where the chest commences, to the chin;
So that the face was twisted from the reins; 13
And want of faculty to see before,
Backward to walk, these wretched souls constrains.
Paralysis perhaps may much derange,
And dislocate the human body sore,
But never wrought, I deem, such wondrous change.
Bethink thee, reader—if God move thy soul 19
To reap instruction from this tale of woe—
How I the tear of pity could control,
When near to me our human form I viewed
So turned and twisted, that the drops which flow
Down from the eyes, the hinder parts bedewed.
I wept indeed, as I reclining pressed 25
A fragment of the rock, until my guide
Exclaimed: "What, art thou foolish, like the rest?
Here pity lives when it is wholly dead:
What greater guilt than his who, filled with pride,

---

28. *i. e.* Pity for the misery of the wicked is an accusation against Divine justice.

Against Heaven s will contends ?—Lift up thy head,
Lift up thy head: see him for whom the deep 31
Earth opened, when the Thebans at the sight
Cried: 'Whither, Amphiaräus, dost thou leap ?
Why quit the battle ?' Yet he plunged amain
E'en down to Minos, who in realms of night
Circles each sinner with his iron chain.
Behold a breast where once his shoulders lay · 37
Because he wished to see too far before,
Now looks he back, and backward makes his way.
Behold Tiresias, altered in his frame,
Who changed the limbs by nature given of yore,
When from a male a female he became,—
Compelled to strike the twisted serpents twain 43
Through many a year, redoubling blow on blow,
Ere he could take his former plumes again.
Aruns is this, to like reverse consigned,
Who in the hills of Luni (where below,
Living in caverns, delves Carrara's hind)
Had for his dwelling place a marble cave, 49
Whence to his sight a prospect was revealed
Of heaven's bright stars, and ocean's azure wave.
And she, who with her long dishevelled hair
Covers her bosom, from our view concealed,
(For all her locks fall down in ringlets there)
Was Manto, who through many a country strayed, 55
And settled afterwards where I was born:
Now let attention to my words be paid.
After her father left his mortal clay,
And Bacchus' city wept in chains forlorn,
Long time o'er earth she sped her weary way.
In beauteous Italy, a lake there lies, 61
Benacus called, above the Tyrol, where
High Alps, enclosing Germany, arise:

32. Amphiaräus was one of the seven kings who besieged Thebes, and a celebrated soothsayer. He is said to have been swallowed up by the earth, which opened under his feet, when his friends cried: "Quò præceps per inane ruis ?" Statius. Thebais. viii. 84. 40. Another celebrated soothsayer. 46. "Aruns incoluit deserti mœnia Lunæ." Lucan. Phars. i. 586. 55. The daughter of Tiresias. She quitted Thebes, dedicated to Bacchus, when it was enslaved by Creon. To escape his tyranny, she wandered into Italy, and settled where Mantua now stands.

There, 'twixt Camonica and Garda flow
O'er Apennine a thousand streamlets fair,
Which to this lake their primal fountains owe.
Here, in the middle, if they passed that way,
The Pastor of Verona and of Trent,
And He of Brescia might his blessing say.
Where sinks the bank with easier slope below,
A warlike front Peschiera doth present,
Against the Bergamese and Brescian foe.
There fall the waters with their swelling tide,
That from Benacus' bosom running o'er,
In limpid streams through verdant meadows glide.
When from the lake it first begins to flow,
'Tis Mincio called—Benacus now no more—
E'en to Governo, where it joins the Po:
Nor wandereth far, before it finds a plain,
O'er which its waves in stagnant pools are spread,
And where, in summer, noxious vapours reign.
Passing this way, the virgin rude saw land,
Full in the middle of the marshy bed,
Without inhabitants—a barren strand.
Here, to avoid all converse with mankind,
She and her followers resolved to dwell;
Here lived, and here her body left behind.
To this lone spot from all the country round
Did men collect, as to a citadel;
So strong it was—enclosed by marshy ground.
On her dead bones a famous city rose;
And Mantua was the name that it received,
From her whose judgment first the station chose.
More numerous were its citizens of old,
Ere Casalodi foolishly believed
The artful tale that Pinamont had told.
And now I warn thee—if thou ever hear
My country's source to other causes traced,

67. The spot is called Prato di Fame, where the three dioceses meet; and the bishops might give benediction to their three flocks. 74. The modern name of the Mincio is Lago di Garda. 95. Alberto de' Casalodi, who possessed Mantua, was persuaded by Pinamonte Buonacossi that he might ingratiate himself with the people by banishing to their own castles the obnoxious nobles. This done, Pinamonte drove out Casalodi, and obtained the sovereignty for himself. See Muratori, anno 1269.

Allow not falsehood to abuse thine ear."
"Master, thy speech convinceth me,"—I said;
"So firmly on thy words my faith is placed,
All others would to me seem embers dead.
But those who walk before,—I pray thee tell,
If any thou deem worthy of remark,
For upon them my thoughts entirely dwell."
My master then: "He with so long a beard,
Which from his cheek spreads o'er his shoulders dark—
When Greece was of her males so nearly cleared,
That scarce the cradles could replenished be,—
Was Augur, and with Calchas gave the time
In Aulis' port to set the anchors free;
Eurypylus his name:—and thus rehearsed
Is found the story in my lofty rhyme,
As well thou know'st, who in the whole art versed.
The other, round his loins so thin and slight,
Was Michael Scot, renowned for magic art,
And deemed in ancient times a wondrous wight.
See Guido,—see Asdente, who laments
That e'er he was prevailed upon to part
With thread and leather; but too late repents.
See those who erst the loom and spindle left
To practise witchcraft—a vile female race,
In use of herbs and incantations deft.
But let us on—for either hemisphere
Cain and the thorns with paly light embrace,
And dip beneath fair Seville's waters clear.
Last night the moon her fullest orb displayed:
And, wandering in that darksome forest rude,
Well mayest thou call to mind her timely aid."
He spake: and we our onward road pursued.

116. Michael Scot was a Scotchman, of great learning and skill in astrology, alchemy, and natural philosophy. He was looked upon as a magician both in his own country and abroad. Boccaccio calls him a great necromancer, and mentions his having been at Florence. "The memory of Sir Michael Scott still survives in many a legend; and in the south of Scotland any work of great labour and antiquity is ascribed either to the agency of Auld Michael, of Sir Wm. Wallace, or of the Devil." Walter Scott, Notes, Lay of the Last Minstrel. He was astrologer to Frederick II. 118. Guido Bonatti, an astrologer of Forli:—Asdente, a shoemaker of Parma, who deserted his business to practise divination. 125. The moon is vulgarly called Cain, or the man in the moon. See Par. ii. 51. 128. In the dark wood of the first canto.

CANTO XXI.

ARGUMENT.

In the fifth partition are punished Barterers and Peculators. They are plunged into a lake of boiling pitch, and guarded by Demons, who thrust them back whenever they appear above. These Demons prepare to attack Virgil, who calms them by his undaunted manner, and prevails upon their leader to give them an escort on their way.

CONVERSING, as we went from bridge to bridge, 1
Of things my Comedy cares not to tell,
We reached at last the summit of the ridge,—
There paused, to view the souls that idly wailed
In Malebolgè's next unhappy cell;—
And wondrous was the darkness that prevailed.
As in the arsenal of Venice boils 7
Tenacious pitch in winter, to repair
The bark disabled by long watery toils;
For since to venture forth they are afraid,
One here a vessel builds, another there
Calks that which many voyages hath made;—
One strikes the prow—one hammers at the poop, 13
One mends a main—and one a mizen sail,
One shapes an oar—another twists a rope;—
So, not by fire beneath, but art divine,
Boiled up thick pitch throughout the gloomy vale,
Whose viscous spatterings all the margin line.
Nought on the surface of the boiling tide 19
I saw, save bubbles rise, and now and then
The whole swell up—then settle and subside
While I was looking down with stedfast gaze,
Back on the instant was I forced again,
"Look, look!" my guide exclaiming.—In amaze,
I turned around, like one who longs to see 25
That which, beheld, compels him to draw back—
By panic fear unnerved so suddenly,
That e'en to look, he may not check his flight:
And in our rear I saw a Demon black
Swiftly advancing o'er the rocky height.
Alas, how fierce and savage was his face! 31
How frightful too the gestures he displayed!
Stretched were his wings, and rapid was his pace.

His shoulder, proudly rising and acute,
Was laden with a miserable shade;
And hard he grasped the sinew of his foot.
"Ye Malebranchè of our bridge," quoth he,
"Lo one of Santa Zita's Elders! haul
The wretch beneath; while I full speedily
Regain that land which plenty more doth hold:
There, save Bonturo, barterers are they all;
And 'No' is quickly turned to 'Yes' for gold."
His load cast down—so swiftly he turned back
O'er the hard rock, that never mastiff fleet
Sprang with such haste a flying thief to track.
The sinner sank, then rose with upward face,
Whilst from beneath the bridge the fiends repeat
"Here hath the Holy Countenance no place,
Here swim you not as erst in Serchio's tide;
And if you relish not our hooks—take care
That in the boiling pitch your back you hide."
Then with a hundred prongs the wretch they maul,
And cry: "To dance in secret now prepare,
And pilfer, if you can, unseen by all."
So to the centre of the pot do cooks
Their scullions teach to thrust the floating stew,
And keep it under with their iron hooks.
To me the master: "Lest it should be seen
That thou art here, conceal thyself from view;
Some rock will haply serve thee for a screen;
And let no insult fill thee with dismay
That may be offered me—prepared I go—
Aforetime have I been in like affray."
Beyond the bridge's head he then proceeded;
And when he reached the sixth embankment—lo!
A calm and dauntless countenance he needed:
For with such anger and tempestuous roar,
As dogs rush forth on one of squalid looks,
Who begs a pittance at some rich man's door;

37. *i. e.* "O Demons of the evil arms, who have the care of our bridge behold one of the Elders of Lucca." Santa Zita was held in reverence there. 41. Bonturo de' Dati,—the greatest peculator in Lucca 48. The "Santo Volto" is an image of our Saviour at Lucca, near which runs the river Serchio.

THE DEMONS IN MALEBOLGE



HIS SHOULDER, PROUDLY RISING AND ACUTE
WAS LADEN WITH A MISERABLE SHADE.

So from beneath the bridge—enraged and hot—
Rushed on my guide the demons with their hooks;
But he exclaimed: "I charge you, touch me not:
Before ye cast your hooks my flesh to tear, 73
Come some one forth to hear what I shall say,
And then consider if to strike ye dare."
"Go, Malacoda go"—exclaimed they all;
Whereat one moved, (meanwhile the rest did stay,)
And coming to him said; "What means your call?"
"Believest thou, Malacoda, I had made 79
My way so far," to him my master said,
"Safe from the hellish wrath ye have displayed,
Unless the Will Divine had sanction given?
That this my comrade should by me be led
Through this dark region is ordained in heaven."
Then in a moment fell his crest of pride,— 85
Down dropt the grappling iron at his feet;
And to the others: "Strike him not," he cried.
To me my lord: "Thou who art crouching there,
Beneath the broken bridge,—quit thy retreat,
For safely now to me mayest thou repair."
Him then with speed I strove to overtake; 91
When came the fiends with such precipitation,
I trembled lest their compact they should break.
So once I saw the infantry alarmed,
Who left Caprona on capitulation,
Seeing so many foes around them armed.
Close to my guide attaching me, I stood 97
Much terrified—nor from their faces black
Turned I mine eyes,—they boded nothing good.
Lowering their hooks, one to the other said,
"What think you if I touch him on the back?"
"Be sure you hit him," was the answer made.
But that chief fiend who had addressed my guide, 103
All in an instant turned himself around;—
And said; "Scarmiglion, be thou pacified;"
Then spake to us: "Ye travellers—be it known

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76. *i. e.* Fiend of the evil tail. 95. The Castle of Caprona, belonging to the Pisans, surrendered to the Guelf forces of Florence and Lucca, in 1289, on condition that the garrison should march out in safety. Dante is believed to have served at the siege.

No further road may o'er this bridge be found;
The sixth arch hence is wholly overthrown.
But if it please you onward to proceed,
Along this rock securely may ye hie;
Another bridge that's near will serve your need.
Just five hours later yesterday than this,
Twelve hundred three score years and six gone by,
The road was broken which leads down the abyss;
And thither will I send some scouts of mine
To watch if any show themselves above:
Depart with them—they will not prove malign.
Come, Alichino—come!" exclaimed he then,
"Cagnazzo, Calcabrina, quickly move;
And Barbarriccia, thou conduct the ten.
Come Libicocco, Draghignazzo fell,
Ciriatto with thy tusks, and Graffiacan,
Thou furious Rubicant, and Farfarell,
Make good your search around the boiling pitch,
And lead these safely to that bridge, whose span
Unbroken runs o'er all the adjoining ditch."
"Master," I said, "O what is this I see?
Our way without an escort let us find;
Thou knowest it well—I ask no guide but thee:
If, as is wont, thou art quick-sighted now,
Canst thou not see how fierce their teeth they grind,
And scowl upon us with a threatening brow?"
And he to me: "I charge thee not to fear;
E'en let them grind their savage teeth accurst,—
They do it at the scalded sufferers here."
O'er the left bank their steps they then incline,
But to their Captain every demon first,
With tongue between his teeth had made a sign,—
When from behind, the sound of trumpet burst.

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111. This falsehood is an instance of Malacoda's treachery. See canto xxiii. 133. 112. To 1266 add 34 (the age of our Saviour at the time of his death) and it gives 1300, the date of Dante's vision. He supposes the convulsion at our Saviour's death was felt even in the depths of hell. 138. They believe that Virgil and Dante are taken in:—hence this sign.

CANTO XXII.

ARGUMENT.

The Poets proceed, accompanied by the Demons, who with their hooks haul up Ciampolo, one of the barterers. His clever device to escape. Battle in consequence between two of the Demons.

Oft squadrons have I seen their station change, 1
Rush to the charge, then suddenly retreat,
Or swift advancing o'er the country range:
Thy plains, Arezzo, often have I seen
Hastily swept by light-armed horsemen fleet;
At tilts and tournaments have often been;—
(Now bells, now trumpets sending forth alarms, 7
With drums and signals loud from castle tower,
Native or foreign, summoning to arms;)
But ne'er to such strange instrument of war
Beheld I horse or foot the country scour,
Or vessel tack by sign from land or star.
With the ten demons now our way we sped; 13
Ah! fell companions! but, "With saints at church,
With gluttons at the tavern," it is said.
Still on the pitch I gazed, that I might know
The secrets of the gulf by closer search,
And mark the souls amid the fire below.
As dolphins heave their backs above the wave, 19
Prognosticating angry tempests black—
Signal to mariners their ship to save;
So, to alleviate the excessive pain,
From time to time some sinner raised his back,
But swift as lightning drew it in again.
As, in a ditch frogs at the water's side 25
Sit squatting,—with their noses raised on high,
The while their feet and all their bulk they hide;
Thus upon either hand the sinners stood:

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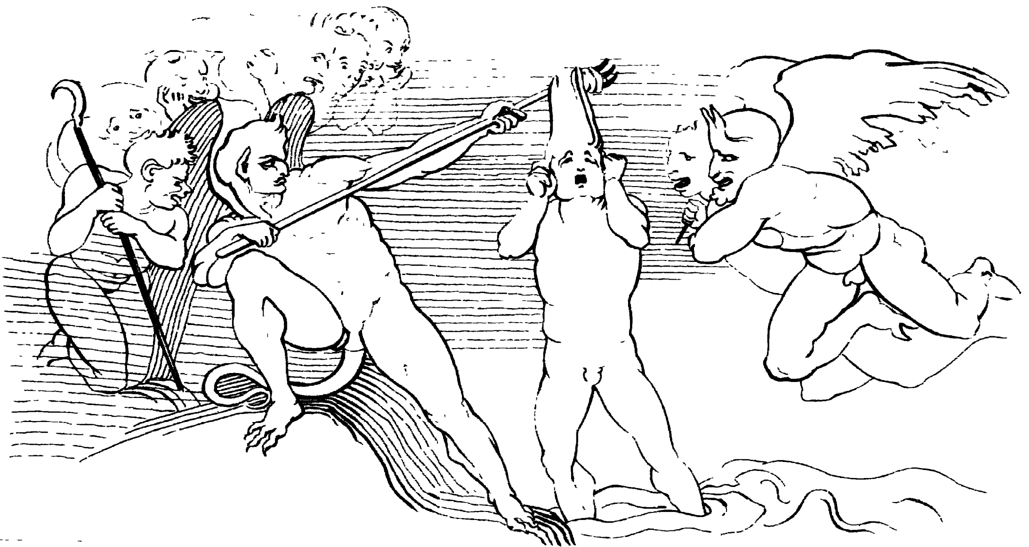
1. Dante sarcastically continues his description of the Demons' march.
4. Dante was present in the memorable battle of Campaldino, fought between the Florentines and the Aretines in 1289, where the latter were signally defeated. Dante was there, he says, "no child in arms, and had much dread, and in the end great joy, through the various chances of the battle." His letter, Aretino. Vita di Dante.

But Barbarriccia now approaching nigh,
Quick they withdrew beneath the boiling flood.
I saw—and still my heart is thrilled with fear— 31
One sinner linger,—as beside a ditch
One frog remains, the others disappear;—
And Graffiacan, who nearest chanced to be,
With grapple seized his hair all stiff with pitch:
Thus pendant, like an otter eke was he.
I now could tell by name the demons all, 37
For I had marked them chosen from the pack,
And listened to them at their muster call.
"O Rubicant, look well, and see you place
Your hooks aright, that they may tear his back,"
Cried all at once the inexorable race.
"Master," I said, "persuade them to disclose, 43
If so thou canst, who is that ill-starred shade
Thus fallen within the clutches of his foes."
Thereat my leader, drawing to his side,
Inquiry of his birth and country made.
"My birthplace was Navarre," he straight replied:
"My mother placed me servant to a lord; 49
(For she had borne me to a reckless man,
Who spent his goods, then closed his life abhorred)
A servant I became in after time
To good king Thibault, and I there began
The tricks I pay for in this scalding slime."
Ciriatto, whose fell mouth, e'en like a boar, 55
A savage tusk on either side displayed,
Soon let him feel how cleverly they tore.
To wicked cats the mouse had fallen a prey;—
But Barbariccia caught him up, and said,
"Whilst I transfix him, stand ye all away."
Then to my master turning, he exclaimed: 61
"More wouldest thou know? Then be thy wish revealed,
Ere by some other demon he be maimed."
"Tell me if any one," inquired my guide,
"Is from Italia's land, of those concealed
Beneath the pitch?" "But lately," he replied,

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48. The name of this barterer was Ciampolo, in the service of Thibault, King of Navarre.

THE LAKE OF PITCH



"WITH GRAPPLE SEIZED HIS HAIR ALL STIFF WITH PITCH"

"I quitted one who lived that country near:
Could I rejoin him in yon sheltering flood,
Nor tenter-hook nor talon should I fear."
Quoth Libicocco: "Not so much delay:"
An arm then seizing in his pincers rude,
He mauled it, till he rent a part away.
And Draghignazzo, he too with a hook
Had clutched his feet; but lo, their chief forbade,
Turning around with angry threatening look.
When they were pacified—their clamour spent—
My guide without delay inquiry made
Of him who on his wound still gazed intent:
"Who was that other spirit, from whose side
Hither thou lately camest in evil hour?"
"It was the Friar Gomita," he replied,—
"He of Gallura, vessel of all fraud,
Who, when his master's foes were in his power,
So treated them, that all his name applaud:
A bribe he took, and set his prisoners free;
In each employ where he could use deceit
The very prince of barterers was he.
With him too Michael Zanché doth reside;
For them Sardinia is a subject sweet,
With which their tongues are never satisfied.
Ah me!—lo, how that other fiend doth grin!
More would I say; but fear my tongue hath bound,
Lest he prepare to lacerate my skin."
To Farfarello turned their savage lord,
Who rolled, in act to strike, his eyes around,
And said: "Go, get thee gone, ill bird abhorred."
"Tuscans or Lombards wouldest thou wish to see,"
Resumed the quaking sufferer, "let me hear;
And I will bid them quickly come to thee:
But let the demons for a while retreat,
That so my comrades may be free from fear;

75. Barbarriccia, captain of Ten. See line 94. 81. The friar Gomita being entrusted with the government of Gallura, one of the four jurisdictions into which Sardinia was divided, received a bribe from his master's enemies, and let them escape. 88. Governor of Logodoro, another of the four Sardinian jurisdictions. 96. Barbariccia, seeing Farfarello preparing to strike Dante, makes this exclamation, adapted to the wings he wore, and the form of his eyes.

And I, remaining in this very seat,
One that I am, will draw forth seven instead,
When I shall whistle, as our custom is,
To show our comrades they may raise the head."
Turned up his snout Cagnazzo, and exclaimed,
Shaking his head: "A cunning scheme is this,
Which, to escape below, the knave hath framed."
Whence he, who had of cunning tricks a store,
Replied: "Well versed in malice sure am I,
To make my own companions smart the more!"
Then burst forth Alichin, inflamed with heat,
Thwarting the rest: "Plunge, if thou dare to try;—
I shall not follow thee with speed of feet,
But wings shall bear me o'er the boiling pitch:
Hie we behind the bank, and we shall see
If thou alone canst all of us o'erreach."
Now for fresh sport, O ye who read prepare!
Each from the bank his eyes withdrew;—first he
Who offered chief resistance to the snare.
Well chose his time the sinner of Navarre—
Fixt firm his feet—leapt down—and in a trice
From the projected plot escaped afar.
Each demon instantly with rage was fraught,
He most, who had encouraged this device;
Wherefore he flew, exclaiming: "Thou art caught."
But futile his attempt,—the speed of fear
E'en wings could not o'ertake:—one dived below,
Up came the other from his vain career.
Thus, when the falcon swoops his wings in air,
The duck dives instant, and eludes the blow;
Back turns the baffled falcon in despair.
Him Calcabrina followed, in despite
Thus to be duped; yet still so fair a cause
Of quarrelling afforded vast delight;
And since no more the barterer there he viewed,
On his companions straight he turned his claws;
A mighty struggle o'er the trench ensued.
But Alichino was a hawk well tried,

119. "According to the proposal of Alichin, the fiends retired, and for a moment withdrew their eyes from the bank to give the sinner a chance." Venturi. 120. Cagnazzo. 125 Alichino. See line 112.

Nor inexpert in clawing:—fell the twain
  Down to the middle of the boiling tide.
The heat soon parted them within the ditch,
  But all attempt to raise themselves was vain;
  Like birdlime glued their wings the adhesive pitch.
Four of his host now Barbarriccia sent, 145
  For they were sorely vext, their drags to bear
  Over the lake.—At his command they went,
Descending rapidly across the ditch.
  They stretched their hooks to aid the entangled pair,
  Who now were burning in the glowing pitch;
And we advancing, left them floundering there. 151

CANTO XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

Dante is saved by Virgil from the demons who pursued them. In the sixth chasm are punished the Hypocrites, who are condemned to pace continually round the gulf under the pressure of cloaks which are gilt without, but lined inside with lead. Catalano, Loderingo, Caiaphas, Annas.

Silent, apart, companionless we went, 1
  The one before, the other close behind,
  Like minor friars upon their journey bent.
On Æsop's fable were my thoughts employed,
  (For this encounter brought it to my mind,)
  How frog and mouse were by the kite destroyed.
Since greater likeness bear not Yes and Yea, 7
  Than, if attentively compared they be,
  From first to last these scenes of strife display.
As from one thought another oft will start,
  So rose from this another presently,
  Which with redoubled terror filled my heart.
For I considered:—Mocked and injured thus— 13
  And we the cause,—full surely they have ground
  To feel annoy, and will be wroth with us.
If rage be added to the spite they bear,
  They will pursue us, fiercer than the hound

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4. A frog offered to carry a mouse across a ditch, with the intention of drowning him, when both were borne off by a kite. 7. The original words "mo" and "issa" signify "now."

That gripes within his teeth some timid hare.
E'en now my locks stood bristling with affright, 19
As I intently listened in the rear.
"O master," I exclaimed, "the demons' spite
Fills me with dread, unless thou canst conceal
Thyself and me; behold! they now are near;
And I already seem their hooks to feel."
"Were I a mirror, not thine outward face 25
Should I," he said, "more speedily receive,
Than doth my soul thy inward wish embrace.
Thy thought e'en now assimilates to mine,
And so alike the expression which they give,
That I from both have formed the same design.
If on the right the bank is so inclined 31
That to the pit adjoining we may hie,
This fancied chase we soon shall leave behind."
Scarce had he time his counsel to suggest,
Ere I beheld the fiends approaching nigh,
With wings outspread, our progress to arrest.
In haste my leader caught me in his arm, 37
Like to a mother wakened from her rest,
Who seeing flames around her—in alarm
Seizes her son, and speeds with rapid flight,
By care for him more than herself possessed,
Clad only in her garment of the night.
Down from the summit of the rocky bank 43
Supine he cast him to that sloping hill
Which to the next partition formed a flank.
So quickly never water urged its course
Through narrow conduit to impel a mill,
Where nearest to the spokes it rolls with force,—
Than o'er that ridge my master hastened on, 49
Clasping me closely to his sheltering breast,
Not as a comrade, but a darling son.
Scarce had his feet attained the rocky bed,
When on the height above, to sight confest,
The fiends appeared; but nought had we to dread;
For that supreme omniscient Providence, 55
Which gave the fifth partition to their sway,
Forbade them ever to depart from thence.
Pacing around with weary steps and slow,

A painted tribe of souls I now survey,
Whose haggard looks express fatigue and woe.
Cloaks had they on, with hoods which downward fell 61
Before their eyes, and like to those in kind,
Worn by the monks who at Cologna dwell.
Outside—with dazzling gold they glittered bright;
Inside—with ponderous lead were they so lined,
That Frederick's cloaks compared to them were light,
O cumbersome to all eternity! 67
Still on the left with them we took our road,
Intent upon their hopeless misery;
But they so slowly did their way pursue,
Opprest beneath the insufferable load,
That at each step our company was new.
Wherefore I said; "O master, look around, 73
And point out some one in this realm of pain,
Whom I may know, by deed or name renowned."
Then, of my Tuscan language one aware,
Behind us cried: "Your steps awhile restrain,
O ye who hurry through the dusky air:—
From me perhaps may ye obtain your need." 79
On which my master turned to me and cried;
"Wait, and henceforward at his pace proceed."
I waited; and saw two, whose visage showed
Excessive eagerness to reach my side;
But the weight checked them, and the narrow road
When they arrived, they eyed their stranger guest 85
Askance, with look of wonder, silently;
Then turning, one the other thus addressed:—
"He by the action of his throat appears
Alive; if dead—what privilege has he,
That as he walks no weighty stole he bears?"
"O Tuscan, thou who comest," they exclaim, 91
"To this sad college of hypocrisy,
Disdain not to inform us what thy name."
I answered: "At that city was I born
Laved by fair Arno as she floweth by;
And this the body I have always worn.
But who are ye, whose grief adown your cheeks 97

59. The Hypocrites. 66. Frederick the Second is said to have punished those guilty of treason by burning them in leaden cloaks.

Flows, as I see, with so profuse a tide?
And what affliction thus a passage seeks?"
"So overwhelming is the ponderous lead,
Which lines our orange mantles," one replied,
"That sighs burst hissing from the o'erbalanced head.
We both were of Bologna, jovial friars,
I Catalano, Loderingo he,—
Elected by your country for umpires,
As some unbiassed man is by the state
Oft chosen to keep peace:—and such were we,
As still is witnessed in Gardingo's fate."
"Friars," I began, "your vile hypocrisies" . . .
But checked myself; for lo! one crucified
With triple stake, appeared before my eyes.
On seeing me, throughout his frame he writhed.
Friar Catalan, who straight his plight descried,
As through his beard with many a sigh he breathed,
Exclaimed: "Before thee lies transfixed, the shade
Who counsel gave, that for the people's weal
A victim for expediency be made.
All naked now he lies athwart the road,
As thou behold'st; and 'tis his fate to feel
Each traveller's weight, and groan beneath the load.
In the same ditch his father Annas lies,
And all the rest who of that council were,
Which to the Jews caused such calamities."
Then Virgil I beheld in wonder bent
Over the wretch who on the cross was there
So vilely stretched in endless banishment.
Next of the friar he sought intelligence:
"Unless ye are forbidden—tell," he said,
"If on the right lies any opening hence,
By which we both in safety may retire,
And leave the baleful pit, nor ought of aid
From the black angels on our road require?"
He answered him: "More near than you suppose,

105. These two hypocrites, chosen to act as mediators, and preserve peace in the city, abused their power to promote their own interests. Bribed to support the Guelfs, they drove out the Ghibelines, and destroyed the houses of the family of the Uberti, which were in the street called Gardingo. See Villani, b. vii. c. 13.

From the main circle juts a rocky ridge,
Which over all the chasms an archway throws,
Save here where it is broken.—Up the steep
Ye still may clamber by the ruined bridge,
Which, sloping to the bottom, forms a heap."
Awhile my leader stood with downcast look, 139
Then said: "Most false intelligence was his,
Who yonder rends the sinners with his hook."
To him the friar: "Much of the devil's vice
Erewhile I at Bologna heard;—and—this—
'He is a liar, and father of all lies.'"
With mighty strides my guide indignant sped, 145
Anger depicted slightly on his face:
Wherefore I left these souls oppressed by lead,
The much loved footsteps of my guide to trace.

CANTO XXIV

ARGUMENT.

Dante is alarmed at the appearance of Virgil, whose countenance betrays his fears. He receives comfort and assistance from his guide; and with great difficulty is enabled to reach the seventh division, where the Thieves are persecuted by a swarm of serpents. Among these he meets with Vanni Fucci of Pistoia, who predicts the disasters that will lead to Dante's banishment.

In that advancing season when the sun 1
Beneath Aquarius dips his radiant hair
And into mid-day night begins to run,
When o'er the earth the hoar frost pure and bright
Assumes the image of her sister fair,
Then quickly melts before Day's genial light—
The rustic, now exhausted his supply, 7
Rises betimes—looks out—and sees the land
All white around, whereat he strikes his thigh—
Turns back—and grieving—wanders here and there,
Like one disconsolate and at a stand;
Then issues forth, forgetting his despair,
For, lo! the face of nature he beholds 13

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139. Virgil had consulted Malacoda about the road. Canto xxi. 111 He now exclaims against his duplicity.

1. At the end of January the sun enters Aquarius.

Changed on a sudden,—takes his crook again,
And drives his flock to pasture from the folds.
With such alarm the master filled my breast,
Soon as his troubled visage met my ken;
And with such speed the mischief was redrest:
For when we reached the broken bridge, my guide 19
Turned himself to me with as sweet a look
As when I saw him by the mountain side.
The ruined steep minutely he surveyed,
And counsel with himself in silence took,
Opened his arms, and raised me undismayed:
And like a man who on some work employed 25
Looks in advance beyond him;—even so
My guide, whilst o'er one crag my weight he buoyed,
Still towards another cast his thoughtful eye,
Exclaiming: "Grasp that firmly; but first know
If on its strength thou fully mayest rely."
No road is this for travellers clothed with lead: 31
For he though light, and I, assisted on
From crag to crag, with difficulty sped:
And if that rugged precinct's steep ascent
Had not been shorter than the adjoining one,
His fate I know not—I had been o'erspent.
But Malebolgé, since throughout it lies 37
All sloping down towards hell's profoundest deep,
One side of every valley thus must rise—
The other fall. At last we forced our way
Up to the summit of the shattered steep,
Where the last fragment of the ruin lay.
So failed the breath within my lungs, what time 43
I reached the height, that on a crag I sate,
No strength remaining, other rocks to climb.
"Now must thou shake off sloth," my guide began;
"For not beneath rich canopies of state,
On beds of down, can Fame be won by man:—
And he who sinks unhonoured to the grave, 49
Leaves of himself on earth such vestige slight,
As smoke in air, or foam upon the wave.
Arise then, and o'er sloth a conquest gain
By strength of mind, which wins in every fight,
Unless the body's cumbrous weight restrain.

A longer flight of steps thou yet must scale; 55
  Think not—these perils passed—to take thy rest:
  If well thou mark me, let my words avail."
Then I arose, and with my voice displayed
  Far better lungs than I in truth possessed;
  "Let 's on—for I am bold and nought dismayed."
Among the rocks our upward course we bent, 61
  Through craggy ways that scarce a track supplied;
  And steeper than before was the ascent.
Still by the way, for fear of seeming weak,
  I held discourse; when from the foss beside
  Came presently a voice unapt to speak:
I know not what it said, although I stood 67
  High on the arch which spans that fearful ground;
  But he who spake appeared in angry mood.
Then down I stooped; but, though with life endued,
  Mine eyes pierced not the gloomy pit profound;
  Wherefore I said: "O master, it were good,
Descending by the wall, this round to leave; 73
  For hence I hear, but do not understand;
  So down I look, but nought do I perceive."
"My answer is—to do thy will with speed;
  For every modest and sincere demand
  Deserves fulfilment, not in word but deed."
The bridge we then descended from the height, 79
  Where to the eighth embankment it is joined;
  And thence appeared the baleful pit in sight.
Within—a crowd of serpents I behold,
  So hideous and diversified in kind,
  That at the very thought my blood runs cold.
No more let Lybia, with her scorching sand 85
  Cheledri, Jaculi, Pareas boast,
  Cenchris, and Amphisbenæ in her land.—
Such host of plagues were ne'er together brought,
  Though Ethiopia, and the Red sea coast
  Add all the pests with which her soil is fraught.
Among this swarm, most loathsome to survey, 91
  Ran spirits naked, and with terror pale:
  No hiding place, no heliotrope had they.

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55. The mountain of Purgatory. **93.** Heliotrope was supposed to

Their hands with serpents were behind them bound;
These through their loins thrust forth the head and tail,
Which meeting in the front were coiled around.
And lo, on one who passed beside that pit 97
A serpent sprang, and pierced his form anon,
Where to the neck the shoulder blade is knit.
So quickly ne'er was written O, or I,
As he took fire and burnt, and, falling prone,
To ashes was converted instantly.
While thus upon the ground his dust was strewed, 103
Spontaneous it collected on the plain,
And suddenly its former shape renewed.
So—as by mighty sages we are told,
The Phœnix dies, and springs to life again,
When o'er her head five hundred years have rolled:
Nor grain, nor herb she tastes, with life endowed, 109
But cinnamon and tears of frankincense;
And myrrh and spikenard form her latest shroud.
And e'en as one that falleth to the ground,
Nor knoweth whether demon violence,
Or epilectic fit his sense hath bound—
When he arises, turns his eyes around, 115
All stupified with anguish, and at gaze
Stands, as distracted, uttering sighs profound;
Such was that sinner after he arose.
Oh how severe the justice God displays,
Inflicting in his wrath such deadly blows!
What was his name, inquired my faithful guide: 121
"Not long ago, from Tuscany I came,
Rained down to this dire gullet," he replied:
"I chose the life of beasts and not of men—
Mule that I was; Van Fucci is my name,
And foul Pistoia was my worthy den."
I to my guide: "Entreat him to remain, 127
And ask the crime for which he here is pent;
I knew him once, defiled with bloody stain."
Dissembled not the thief when this was said;
But straight to me his soul and look he bent,

---

possess the power of counteracting poison. The fraudulent are tortured by serpents, the emblem of their crime.

With melancholy hue of shame o'erspread:
And in these words began: "More am I grieved
At being caught in this most wretched hole,
Than at my sufferings, when of life bereaved.
What thou desirest I may not deny:
Here am I thrust so low because I stole
The hallowed treasures of the sacristy,
And on another falsely threw the blame.
But lest, if thou escape this darksome pit,
Thou should'st delight in telling of my shame—
Open thine ears, and hear what I declare:
The Neri first Pistoia's walls shall quit;
Her race and laws shall Florence then forswear.
From Valdimagra Mars collects around
A vapour, wrapt with clouds o'ercharged and fell;
Which thence, with tempest fierce, and angry sound,
Shall clash in combat on Piceno's plain;
Whence suddenly the mist he shall dispel,
Whereby shall each Bianco there be slain;
This, to o'erwhelm thee with despair, I tell."

CANTO XXV.

ARGUMENT.

Fucci is seized by serpents; and, endeavouring to escape, is pursued by Cacus, in the form of a Centaur. Our Poet then meets with the spirits of three of his countrymen, notorious thieves, two of whom undergo a most marvellous transformation in his presence.

His speech thus closed,—the thief insultingly
Pointed his hands in scornful gesture vile,
Exclaiming: "Take them, God, they are for thee."
I from that instant was the serpent's friend;
For one about his throat enwreathed its coil,
As though it said: "No more shalt thou offend."

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139. Having robbed the church of St. James, in Pistoia, Vanni Fucci charged Vanni della Mona with the sacrilege, who was put to death in consequence. 142. Vanni Fucci foretels the circumstances that led to Dante's banishment, viz. the division of the Guelf party into the Neri and Bianchi, which originated at Pistoia. 145. This is an allusion to the victory won by the Marquis Morello Malaspina of Valdimagra, who at the head of the Neri, "the cloudy vapour," defeated the Bianchi in the Campo Piceno, near Pistoia.

Another clasped his arms; and like a chain 7
Was riveted in front of him so fast,
That all attempt to move them had been vain.
Pistoia! ah Pistoia! it is time
That fire consumed thee, since thou hast surpassed
Even thine ancestors in height of crime!
No soul throughout the murky rounds of hell 13
Towards God beheld I manifest such pride;—
Not he, from Thebes' high battlements who fell.
He fled—nor spoke again:—then did I see
A Centaur coming, full of rage, who cried:
"This impious, foul blasphemer—where is he?"
Maremma breeds not such a host, I ween, 19
Of snakes, as on his hip their coil enwreathed,
Reaching to where the human face is seen.
Behind the neck, upon his shoulder, lay
A dragon fierce, with outstretched wings, who breathed
Fierce flames of fire on all who crossed his way.
My faithful master said, "Cacus is this, 25
Who at the foot of Aventine erewhile
Made oftentimes a lake of blood.—Not his
The path wherein his brethren onward hie;
So infamous the robbery, made with guile,
Of the great herd of cattle pasturing nigh.
But ceased his deeds of evil, when were dealt 31
A hundred blows by the Herculean mace;
Though scarcely ten perhaps the robber felt."
Cacus, while thus my master spake, was gone,
When came three spirits below at rapid pace,
Of whose arrival warning had we none;
Till on a sudden, cried they, "Who are ye?" 37
Wherefore we ceased discoursing as we went,
And fixed on them alone our scrutiny.
I knew them not; but so it did befal,
(As often comes to pass by accident)
That one had need another's name to call,
Asking his comrades: "Where hath Cianfa strayed?" 43

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12. It was a prevailing opinion that the people of Pistoia were descended from the followers of Catiline, who, according to Sallust, took refuge there. 15. Capaneus. See canto xiv. 46. 19. A low marshy tract, near Siena. 43. The three spirits who lately arrive.

Whereat my guide's attention to engage,
Sign with my finger to my lip I made.
No wonder, reader, should'st thou disbelieve
What now will be unfolded in my page;
For I who saw it scarce can credit give.
Whilst upon them mine eyes attentive hung, 49
A serpent with six feet like lightning sped
Full in the front of one, and to him clung.
His middle feet he round his paunch did wreathe,
And o'er his arms his foremost feet outspread;
Then fixed in either cheek his savage teeth.
Stretched o'er the thighs the hinder feet remained; 55
And 'twixt them both he made his tail protrude,
Which with the loins behind he had enchained.
So closely ne'er did circling ivy bind
An aged tree, as round his limbs were glued
Those of the horrid beast, about them twined.
Then were they mingled, e'en as they had been 61
Of melted wax, in self-same hues arrayed;
And which was which no longer could be seen,—
Like burning paper, when there glides before
The advancing flame a brown and dingy shade,
Which is not black, and yet is white no more.
In wonder lost the other two stood near, 67
And cried: "Agnello, oh how changed art thou!
Behold, nor two nor one dost thou appear."
Already the two heads to one were grown,
When the two aspects disappearing, now
One face, partaking of the twain, was shown.
Two arms were visible where four had been; 73
The thighs, the legs, the belly, and the chest
Became such limbs as never yet were seen.
All vestige of the former shape was gone;
Nor one, nor two the unsightly frame expressed;
And in such guise it moved full slowly on.
As underneath the dog-star's scorching ray, 79
The lizard, darting swift from fence to fence,
Appears like lightning if he cross the way;—

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had been in company with Cianfa; and he, it seems, remained behind. Hence the question where he was. 67. Buoso degli Abati—see line 140; and Puccio Sciancati—a noted robber. See line 148.

So, to the stomach of the other twain,
A viper came, inflamed with violence,
Livid and black e'en as a pepper grain:
And in that part whence first our embryo strength
Is drawn, he pierced one shade, then fell below,
In front of him extending all his length.
Him viewed the transfixt spirit, but was dumb;
And motionless remaining, yawned, as though
By sleep or fever he were overcome.
He eyed the snake, the snake that look gave back;
One from his wound, the other hard and strong
Fumed through his mouth, while mixed the vapours black.
Now let Nasidius' and Sabellus' fate
No more be made a boast in Lucan's song;
And let him list the tale I here relate.
Silent be Ovid;—though his poetry
Made Arethuse become a fount of old,
Cadmus a snake, no jealousy have I.
For ne'er two natures changed he face to face,
So that they both assumed the other's mould,
And each the other's substance did embrace.
Their limbs in such exact accordance met,
That to a fork his tail the serpent cleft;
The wounded shade his feet together set.
Connected each with each, the legs and thighs
So closely clung, that soon, combined, they left
No trace of junction to our wondering eyes.
The cloven tail that shape did now assume
Lost by the other; soft one's skin was made,
Meanwhile the other's hardened in its room.
Arms into armpits entered—strange to view;
And as the beast's short feet new length displayed,
The long arms of the other shorter grew.
His hinder feet, now twisted into one,
Were straightway seen another form to wear:
And with the other was like marvel done.
The smoke doth both with novel hues o'erlay;
And in the skin of one is gendered hair,

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83. The viper is Francesco Guercio Cavalcanti. See line 151.
94. Two Roman soldiers in Cato's army, who were stung by serpents, one of whom fell instantly into ashes —*Lucan's Phars.* ix. 766.

While from the other's skin it falls away.
The man arose;—the serpent fell below; 121
Though still the while those impious eyeballs gazed
Upon the change each face did undergo.
His face the erect one towards his temples drew;
And thence from the superfluous matter raised
On either side, the ears spontaneous grew.
That superfluity which yet remained 127
Appeared a nostril to the impious face,
And the two lips their proper size attained.
He who lay prone did now prolong his chin,
Both ears contracting into little space,
E'en as a snail, when he his horns draws in.
The tongue, which, undivided, freely spoke, 133
Now splits in twain, while the other's forks unite;
Whereat their breathing ceased, and ceased the smoke.
The soul, transformed into a brute, now hies
Hissing along the vale; the one upright
Spits after him contemptuous, as he flies,
Then scornful turned on him his shoulders new, 139
And to the other spoke: "Let Buoso now,
E'en like to me, all-fours his way pursue."
Such changes did the seventh round present;
And I the plea of novelty avow,
If here my verse abhors embellishment.
And though confusion overwhelmed mine eye, 145
And though into amaze my mind was thrown,—
These shades could not escape so secretly,
But that I recognized Sciancato, who
Of the three comrades that came first, alone
Had not been altered to some figure new:
The other's death thou, Gaville, dost bemoan. 151

CANTO XXVI.

ARGUMENT.

On recognizing the five thieves as his countrymen, Dante reproaches Florence in an ironical strain. From the arch that stretches over the eighth pit, they see numerous flames, where are punished evil

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151. Guercio Cavalcanti, a robber, killed at Gaville, in the Valdarno.—His death was cruelly avenged by his faction, who wasted the country with fire and sword.

counsellors. Diomed and Ulysses:—the latter relates his adventures and the manner of his death.

Exult, O Florence, in so great a fame, 1
Your wings are waving over land and sea;
And e'en through hell resounds your mighty name!
Among the robbers I discovered five,—
Your citizens,—five such—it shameth me;
Nor great the reputation you derive.
But if, as morning rises, dreams are true, 7
Erelong you shall experience all the ill
Prato and other towns would have you rue.
Had it arrived, too soon it would not be;
I wish it had, since come at last it will;
As age advances, heavier grief to me.
Departing, we ascend a staircase rude, 13
Carved in the rock down which we lately went:
My guide preceded—I his steps pursued.
Wending our way, thus desolate and lone,
'Mid rugged crags and dire impediment,
We grasped with feet and hands the jutting stone.
Then did I grieve, and now I grieve again, 19
When I remember what there met mine eyes;
And, more than I am wont, my mind restrain,
Lest, uncontrolled by virtue, it be driven,
And I abuse those better faculties,
Some favouring star, or higher Power hath given.
In that fair season when least hides his face 25
He whose effulgence gilds the glowing sky;
When to the gnat the buzzing fly gives place;—
As many fire-flies as the rustic sees
Down in the vale, where field and vineyard lie,
Whilst on the hill his limbs recline at ease;
With flames so numerous shone, all gleaming bright, 31
The eighth abyss, as I with steady eyes
Discerned, when of the depth we gained a sight.

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1. A bitter irony, in reference to the five Florentines mentioned in the last canto. 9. The calamities were, a dreadful conflagration in Florence, the falling in of a bridge over the Arno, on which a vast multitude were assembled, and the discord and sanguinary battles between the Neri and Bianchi, in 1304. Prato is a town in the neighbourhood of Florence. 12. Dante alludes to his own approaching banishment.

And e'en as he, whose wrongs did bears resent,
Beheld Elijah's car from earth arise,
By fiery steeds borne up heaven's steep ascent,—
And as its course he followed with his eye, 37
Nought could perceive except the flame alone,
Ascending like a little cloud on high;—
So moved each flame before the opening cave;
And none its prey disclosed;—yet every one
A furtive shelter to some sinner gave.
I stood so bending forward o'er the bridge,— 43
That though not pushed, I should have fallen below,
Had I not firmly grasped a rocky ridge.
Seeing me thus attentive, spake my guide:
"Within the fires are spirits, racked by woe,
Who in this scorching garb their persons hide."
"Now hast thou satisfied my soul's desire, 49
Master," I said,—"that so it was, erewhile
I fancied, and was anxious to inquire.
Whose flame is that with summit cleft in twain,
As though it were uprising from the pile,
Of Eteocles and his brother slain?"
"Ulysses," he replied, "and Diomed 55
Within are tortured; and at equal rate
Hasten to pain, as erst to wrath they sped:
Pent in one flame, they rue the treacherous steed,
Whose fatal ambush proved the destined gate
That ushered forth the Roman's noble seed:
There rue the fraud whereby in death doth still 61
Deïdamia her Achilles wail;
And the Palladium adds fresh cause of ill."
"If they may speak, within these fires confined,
Master," I said, "O let this prayer avail—

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54. The enmity of the two brothers, Eteocles and Polynices, is said to have been so inveterate that the fire, which consumed their bodies on the same funeral pile, refused to unite, and divided itself into two distinct flames. See *Statius*, *Theb.* xii. 430; *Lucan*, i. 145. 57. *i. e.* As in their life they were associated in deeds of treachery and violence, so are they now united in suffering and torment. 60. The wooden horse was the cause of the destruction of Troy; and that of Æneas' voyage and settlement in Italy. 61. Ulysses deceived Achilles, by suppressing that part of the oracle which foretold his death as a consequence of his going to the siege of Troy.

This single prayer for thousand prayers combined—
That I may be allowed my steps to stay, 67
Until the horned flame approacheth nigh:—
Behold how anxiously I bend that way."
To me he answer gave: "Full well thy prayer
Deserves my praise, and therefore I comply;
But from addressing them thyself, forbear:
Be mine to speak—for I already know 73
What thou would'st say; these Grecians, in their pride
Might not on thee perhaps their words bestow."
When now the flame was seen that place to reach
Which seemed appropriate to my faithful guide,
In words like these I heard him frame his speech.
"Ye spirits twain, within one fire contained,— 79
Your gratitude, however slight the share,
If e'er, while living upon earth, I gained,
What time I sung my lofty minstrelsy,—
Here tarry; and let one of you declare,
Where self-devoted he lay down to die."
The larger horn of that old flame began 85
To curl itself, and then in murmurs broke,
E'en like a fire that labouring breezes fan:
Then, moving here and there in many a wave,
The crest, as though it were a tongue that spoke,
Burst forth articulate, and utterance gave.
"On leaving Circe, who detained me more 91
Than twelve full months, Gaieta's headland near,
Ere yet Æneas thus had named the shore;—
Nor fondness for my son, nor care for thee,
My aged Sire, nor love's requital dear,
That should have cheered thy heart, Penelope,
Could in my mind the strong desire arrest 97
To learn experience in the affairs of man;—
What virtues, and what vices rule his breast.
Over the wide unfathomable main,
In one lone bark, my course I dauntless ran,
With the few faithful friends that formed my train.
As far as Spain I either coast descried, 103
Far as Morocco and Sardinia's shore,

63. Meaning Ulysses. 93. So named after Æneas' nurse.—Æn. vii. 1. 103. The coast of Europe and of Africa.

And other isles washed by that circling tide.
My friends and I were worn, and full of days,
When we that strait arrived at, where of yore
Did Hercules his warning pillars raise,
Lest man to pass the boundary presume. 109
Seville was left behind us on our right;
On the other hand was Ceuta lost in gloom.
'Comrades,' I said, 'who now have reached the west,
And won your way through perils infinite,—
Short is the space ere all will be at rest;
Let each then rouse his drooping energies 115
That land without inhabitants to find—
Behind the Sun, which still more westward lies.
Bear your illustrious origin in view;
For not to live like brutes were ye designed,
But knowledge high and virtue to pursue!'
This brief oration, to my comrades made, 121
Availed so much their ardour to excite,
It could not afterwards have been allayed.
The poop now turning towards the morning sun,
We plied our oars to wing our foolish flight;
And on the left hand still our sea-way won.
The stars that o'er the other pole are spread 127
That night I saw, while ours was so deprest,
It rose not higher than the ocean's bed.
Five times the moon had shone in brightest ray,
As oft was robbed of her transparent vest,
Since first we entered on our arduous way—
When, dim in distance, reared its brow on high 133
A mountain—which, now bursting on our view,
Appeared the loftiest that e'er met mine eye.
Great was our joy—a joy soon turned to woe—
For rushing from that land unknown and new,
A whirlwind sprang, and with repeated blow
Thrice drove the vessel and the waters round; 139
The poop ascended as the fourth wave rose;
The prow lay buried in the depth profound;
And o'er our heads Heaven doomed the waves to close."

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108. Gibraltar, called the pillars of Hercules, was supposed to be the limit of the habitable world. 117. That Ulysses perished in an attempt to pass the Straits is an opinion taken from Pliny. 134. The mountain of Purgatory.

CANTO XXVII.

ARGUMENT.

Count Guido di Montefeltro, a Ghibelline of high distinction, holds a conversation with Dante from within the fire. The Count attributes his wretched fate to the artful persuasions of Pope Boniface, who had promised him absolution for the crime he required him to commit.

Now rose the flame with calm and upright spire,
Its speech concluded—and prepared to go,
Since the sweet Poet granted its desire,
When from behind another came in sight,
Which sending forth a moan, confused and low,
Our eyes attracted to its curling height.
As the Sicilian bull (which roared of old
First with his shrieks, as justly came to pass,
Whose cruel hand had wrought the monstrous mould)
Rebellowed loudly with the sufferer's cry,
So that, all fashioned as it was of brass,
It seemed to be transpierced by agony;
In mode like this—no way or outlet found—
The miserable words that first did flow
Changed to the flame's own voice their proper sound.
But when, a passage won, the flames displayed
Their summits—quivering, as the tongue below
Imparted the direction they obeyed—
These words broke forth: "O thou, to whom I speak,—
In Lombard phrase but lately heard to say,
'Thou mayest depart—from thee no more I seek,'—
Though somewhat tardily to thee I came,
Grieve not to pause and hold discourse, I pray;
Thou seest it grieves not me, though wrapt in flame.
If to this glooming world thou hast of late
Been hurried downward from fair Italy,
That land beloved, whence all my crimes I date—

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7. Invented by Perillus to please the tyrant Phalaris, who made the first experiment on the contriver. 19. The speaker is Count Guido da Montefeltro,—a man of great renown in war, who late in life assumed the Franciscan habit. See his own account of himself, line 67. 20. See line 3, where it is said, that Virgil permitted the flame, containing Ulysses and Diomed, to depart,—not mentioning the words he actually used. 26. Guido mistakes Virgil for a condemned sinner coming to be punished.

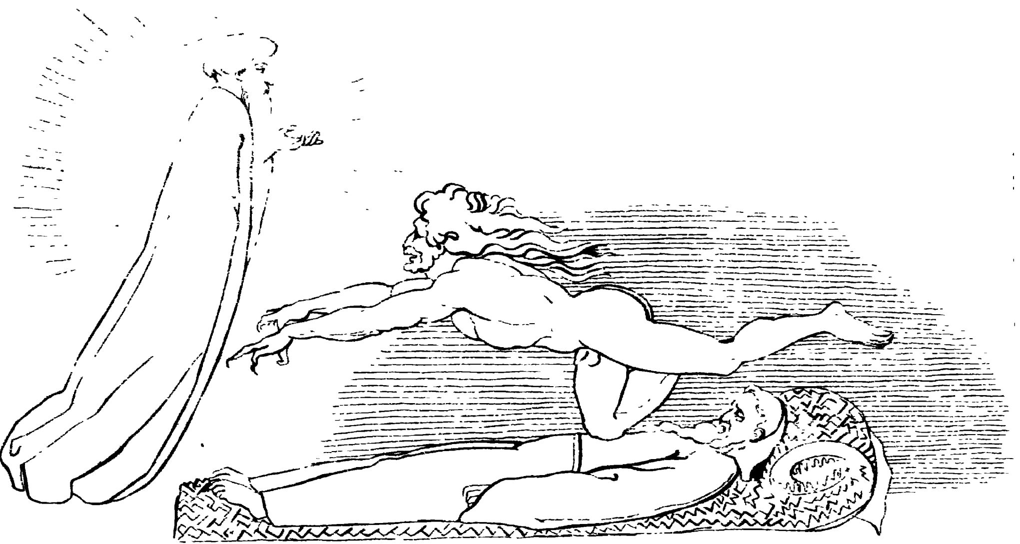
Say, if Romagna still by war is torn,
  For 'mid the hills that 'twixt Urbino lie
  And those whence Tiber floweth I was born."
Still was I bending down to hear the flame,
  When suddenly mine escort touched my side,
  Saying: "Speak thou, for he from Latium came."
And I, whose answer was already framed,
  Without delay obeyed my faithful guide:
  "O thou secreted spirit!" I exclaimed,—
"Devoid of war within her tyrant's breast
  Romagna is not now, nor e'er hath been;
  But when I left her, war was then supprest.
Unchanged for years remains Ravenna's land;
  There broods Polenta's eagle; so that e'en
  O'er Cervia too its ample wings expand.
In Forli, which such long resistance made,
  And with the Frenchman's blood the soil imbrued,
  The green arms of the Lion are obeyed.
The mastiffs of Verucchio, young and old,
  Whom, with his gore distained, Montagna rued,
  Still drive their teeth into the prey they hold.
There, where Santerno and Lamone glide,
  The Lion of the snowy field commands,
  Who, each returning autumn, changes side.
That town, whose bank by Savio's stream is laved,
  E'en as between the plain and mount she stands,
  So liveth, partly free, and part enslaved.
But who thou art, I pray thee let me hear;

29. *i. e.* From Montefeltro. 41. Guido Novello da Polenta, Lord of Ravenna and Cervia, bore an eagle for his coat of arms. He was the friend and patron of Dante. Under his family Ravenna enjoyed tranquillity for many years. 43. The city of Forli, in 1282, sustained a siege a gainst the French, who were defeated in a sally by Guido da Montefeltro (the spirit whom Dante addresses,) with very great slaughter. 46. Malatesta, and Malatestino his son,—lords of Rimini, called from their ferocity, the mastiffs of Verucchio, the name of their castle. 47. A noble knight, leader of the Ghibelline party at Rimini, murdered by the Malatestas. 49. Upon the river Santerno is situated the town of Imola;—upon the Lamone, the town of Faenza; both subject to Machinado Pagani, surnamed "Il Diavolo." He changed his politics according to circumstances; at one time a Guelf, at another a Ghibelline. 52. The town of Cesena.

Be not more hard than I have been :—so may
Thy name on earth exalted honours bear."
Then, when in its peculiar mode had roared
The flame awhile, its top was seen to play
This way and that ;—anon this sound it poured :
" Could I believe my answer would be made
To one who ever might the world regain,
This flame should rest in peace, nor more be swayed ;
But since no living soul, if true it be
As I have heard, e'er left this gulph of pain,—
Fearless of infamy, I answer thee.
A soldier once—I next around me tied
St. Francis' cord, in hope to expiate crime ;
And truly had those hopes been verified,
But that the mighty Priest, (whom evil take)
Allured me to my sins a second time ;
And how, and why, I will disclosure make.
While yet a form of flesh and bone was mine,
(My mother's gift,) my deeds resembled less
Those of the lion than the fox.—so fine
The artifice with which I played my game,
So exquisite my cunning and address,
The world's far limits sounded with my fame.
But when I saw that time of life begin,
When every man, the port approaching, ought
To coil the ropes, and take the canvass in ;—
What first had pleased me, irksome seemed to grow ;
And to repentance and confession brought,
I had been blest ;—alas, now plunged in woe !
The haughty prince of Modern Pharisees,
Who near the Lateran his warfare waged,
And not 'gainst Moors or Jewish enemies,

70. Pope Boniface VIII. **85.** Pope Boniface.—He was warring against Christians, viz. against the Colonna family, who lived near the Lateran, for the purpose of private revenge, and not against Infidels, nor against those renegade Christians, by whom the Saracens, in 1291, were assisted to recover St. John D'Acre, the last possession of the Christians in the Holy Land, nor against the Jews who trafficked there, and sold provisions to the Turks during the siege. **79.** " The good mariner, when he draws near the port, furls his sails, and enters it softly ; so ought we to lower the sails of our worldly operations, and turn to God with all our heart and understanding." Dante, Convito, Trat. iv. 28.

THE CONTENTION FOR GUIDO DE MONTEFELTRO [illegible]



WHEN I WAS [illegible] FRANCIS CAME
BUT [illegible] SENT HIM BACK
[illegible]

(For all were Christians whom his vengeful hand
Opposed; and none at Acre had engaged,
Or e'er had trafficked in the Sultan's land,)
Regarded not his own exalted state,
And holy office, nor my sacred cord,
Which should the form it girds attenuate;
But, as of old, to cure his leprosy,
Silvester was by Constantine implored;
So in commanding tone he called on me
To mitigate the fever of his pride:
He asked my counsel, but I answered not,
Deeming his words to drunkenness allied.
Again he said to me: 'Be not afraid—
I do absolve thee;—tell me by what plot
May Palestrino in the dust be laid.
Heaven, as thou knowest, I have the power at will
To lock or unlock; hence the keys are twain,
Which erst my predecessor prized so ill.'
Then had his cogent arguments full sway,
For silence could procure me little gain;
And I: 'O Father, since you wash away
The sin I am about to perpetrate,—
Large be your promise—your performance slack,—
Thus will you triumph in your high estate.'
When I was dead,—for me St. Francis came;
But one of the black Cherubs sent him back,
Exclaiming: 'Wrong me not—his soul I claim.
Down to my herd of slaves must he repair,
Because he has of fraud the adviser been,
Since which, my hand hath held him by the hair.

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95. Sylvester the first Pope, canto xix. 117, was called out of a cave in Mount Soracte, where he was concealed. 102. Pellestrino was a fortress belonging to the Colonna family. They having opposed Boniface's election, he published a crusade against them; but being unable to take this fortress, he called in the famous Count Guido di Montefeltro to his aid, who advised him to make large promises and not perform them. Favourable terms being offered for a surrender the town was given up, when the Colonna, apprised of his intentions to put them to death, made their escape. See Sismondi, Hist. des Repub. Ital. cap. xxiv. 105. Celestine V. "who made the grand refusal." Canto iii. 60. 112. Montefeltro late in life had become a Franciscan friar. See Purg v 104, where a similar contest takes place.

Nought but repentance ever can absolve;—
But to repent, and yet incline to sin,
A contradiction would in terms involve.'
Oh! with what anguish from him did I bound, 121
When seizing me, he said: 'Perhaps you thought
I was not a logician so profound.'
He carried me to Minos, who eight times
Around him coiled his tail, and bit it, fraught
With mighty rage:—then said: 'His are the crimes
That fix his doom within the thievish fire.' 127
I therefore, here among the lost am pent,
And thus enveloped, rove in torment dire."
When he had finished his discourse forlorn,
The flame departed, moaning as it went,
And writhing to and fro its sharpened horn.
My guide and I now urged our onward way 133
Along the rock, till we the arch bestrode
That spans the foss in which their penance pay
Those who are burdened for the strife they sowed.

CANTO XXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

They arrive at the ninth gulf, where the sowers of Scandal, Schismatics, and Heretics are seen with their limbs miserably mangled. Mahomet. Ali. Piero da Medicina. Curio. Mosca. Bertrand de Bornio.

Who, e'en in language unconstrained by rhyme, 1
Of all the blood and wounds I saw could speak,
Though he described their horrors many a time?
No tongue forsooth but in the attempt must fail—
Our mind too finite, and our speech too weak
To comprehend the woes I would detail.
If in Apulia's memorable land 7
Were all the grieving nations gathered round,
Who met destruction by the Roman's hand,—

---

118. Though Absolution is given by the Pope himself, yet the Devil prevails, on the ground that repentance (which absolution implies) is altogether inconsistent with the intent to commit sin, and is a contradiction in terms. Such is Dante's opinion of absolution

Or in that lengthened war incurred their fate,
What time the spoils with golden rings were crowned,
As Livy's faithful history doth relate;—
Those other nations, too, who were subdued 13
Beneath the blows of Robert Guiscard bold;
And those whose whitened bones may still be viewed
At Ceperan, that saw the Apulians fly—
False to their lord; and where Alardo old
Near Tagliacozzo won the victory; -
And all could show their suffering limbs, pierced through,
Or lopt away;—nought were they to compare 20
With what this ninth compartment gave to view.
A cask, split down the middle or the end,
Gapes not so wide as one I witnessed there,
Ripped from the chin to where the haunches bend.
Between his legs the entrails hung; meanwhile 25
The midriff, and the paunch were seen confest—
Receptacle of what is foul and vile.
While, all intent, on him my sight I bend,
He eyed me, opening with his hand his breast,
And said, "Behold how I my bosom rend!
Behold how Mahomet is rent in twain! 31
Before me, cloven upward from the chin
E'en to the brow, walks Ali, racked with pain:
And all the others, whom thou seest forlorn,
On earth sowed seeds of scandal, and the sin
Of schism incurred, and therefore thus are torn.
A demon is behind us, who bestows 37
These cruel wounds with sword of sharpest steel,
Inflicting constantly on each fresh blows,

11. After the battle of Cannæ three bushels and a half of gold rings were collected from the fingers of the knights who were slain. See Livy, xxiii. 12. 14. Robert Guiscard, the famous Norman, came to defend the Greek Emperor's possessions, and defeated the Saracens in Apulia, but took possession of the country he came to defend. He died in 1110. See Paradiso, xviii. 48. 15. Manfred, king of Apulia, and his allies, were defeated at Ceperan with an immense loss, owing to the treachery of the Apulians, by Charles of Anjou, in 1265. See Purg. iii. 118. 18. Near Tagliacozzo, Charles defeated Conradin, the successor of Manfred, by the stratagem of Alardo di Valeri, lying in wait till the Germans had worsted part of his army, and then surprising them, when dispersed for plunder.

Oft as we traverse this accursed strand;
Since ever and anon our gashes heal,
Ere we repass the spot where he doth stand.
But who art thou, whom on the rock I find 43
Thus musing?—haply wishing to delay
The pangs by conscience to thy crimes assigned?"
"Death hath not struck him yet; nor is he led
By crime to punishment; but—that he may
Obtain experience full, I who am dead,"
Replied the bard, "must his conductor be 49
Through the deep gulf of Hell from round to round:
This is as true as that I speak to thee."
More than a hundred, when these words arose,
Paused to behold me from the trench profound;—
In wonderment forgetting all their woes.
"Go, then, and warn Friar Dolcin—thou who mayest 55
Belike soon see the sun,—with store of grain
To arm himself, unless he is in haste
To follow me, and straitened by the snow,
A victory the Novarese obtain
O'er him whom else they could not overthrow."
These words spake Mahomet to me—one foot 61
Raised, as preparing to advance—which now
Departing from us, to the ground he put.
Another shade (whose throat was cleft in twain,
And nose lopt off, from underneath his brow;
And unto whom did but one ear remain,
Standing to gaze in wonder with the rest) 67
Now bared his windpipe all distained with gore
Before the other shades, and me addressed:
"O thou who art not stained with guilty dye,

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55. In 1305, Friar Dolcin, calling himself an apostle of Christ, denounced the vicious priests, declared the community of property, and obtained several thousand followers. Attacked by the Inquisition, both men and women stoutly defended themselves near Novara, in Piedmont; nor were they captured till their provisions were cut off by a deep snow. Above 500 of his followers perished from starvation and the sword. He himself was mangled with red hot pincers, and then burnt as a heretic, enduring his torments with the greatest fortitude, and preserving his countenance unchanged amid his sufferings. His beautiful and youthful wife, Margarita, chose rather to follow the example of her husband than enounce her doctrines. See Villani, viii. 84.

And whom in Latium I have seen before,
(Unless too strong resemblance doth belie)
On Pier da Medicina thought bestow, 73
If thou once more that lovely plain behold,
Which from Vercelli slopes to Mercabo.
And be these words to Fano's worthy twain,
To Guido, and to Angiolello told;
That, if all foresight here be not in vain,
They near Cattolica shall overboard 79
Be cast, and sunk in ocean, by the guile
And wicked treachery of a tyrant lord.
So great offence did never Neptune view,
Wrought 'twixt Majorca and the Cyprian isle,
Not e'en by pirates, or by Argive crew.
That traitor vile with but a single eye, 85
(Who owns the land a spirit with me here
Would wish, I deem, he never had been nigh)
Them to a parley with him shall invite;
And so contrive, that neither vow nor prayer
Shall they require against Focara's might."
Then I: "Point out, and let the soul be seen, 91
(Would'st thou be spoken of on earth by me)
Who to that land would fain he ne'er had been."
Raising his hand, he seized his comrade's cheek,
And opening wide his jaws said: "This is he
Of whom thou askest;—lo! he cannot speak.
This is the outcast wretch who took away 97
The doubt from Cæsar's mind, when he exclaimed:
'To men prepared 'tis fatal to delay!'"

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73. Piero of Medicina, near Bologna.—Fomenting strife between Guido da Polenta and Malatesta di Rimini, he obtained presents from both. 74. The plain of Lombardy. 76. Guido del Cassero, and Angiolello da Cagnano, two most distinguished citizens of Fano, had incurred the displeasure of Malatesta the younger, lord of Rimini. Pretending to be reconciled, he invited them to an entertainment, and caused them to be drowned near Cattolica, between Fano and Rimini. 85. The same Malatesta, whose land (Rimini). Curio here would wish he had never seen. See note, line 97. 90. As Malatesta will cause them to be drowned on their passage, they will have no occasion to offer up prayers against the boisterous winds from Mount Focara. 97. Curio, banished from Rome, joined Julius Cæsar at Rimini, and, according to Lucan, determined him to pass the Rubicon, by exclaiming—"Tolle moras; nocuit semper differre paratis."—Phars. i. 281.

Oh! what bewilderment he now betrayed,
His tongue cut out! how Curio now was tamed,
Who had so boldly this assertion made!
Then one, deprived of both his hands, who stood 103
Lifting the bleeding stumps amid the dun
Dense air, so that his face was stained with blood,—
Cried: "In thy mind let Mosca bear a place,
Who said (alas!) 'Deed done is well begun,'
Words fraught with evil to the Tuscan race:"—
"And of thy house the ruin, let me add," 109
I said; whereat, redoubling moan on moan,
He sped, like one by sorrow struck, and mad.
I stood, still gazing on the band aloof,
And saw a thing I should have feared alone
Thus to record, with want of other proof,
Unless my conscience made me feel secure— 115
That good companion, which makes bold the man
Whose breastplate is—to know his thoughts are pure.
I saw indeed, and still I seem to see
A trunk without a head, that onward ran,
Like others of this mournful company.
Fast by the hair he held the severed head, 121
Like to a lantern dangling in his hand;
While viewing us intent, "Ah me!" he said:
E'en thus unto himself a lamp was he;
And two in one, and one in two I scanned;
God only knows how such a thing could be.
When to the bridge's foot he had drawn near, 127
He raised his arm, and with it reared the head,
To bring its words thus closer to our ear.
"Behold the agony in which I pine,
Thou, who still breathing visitest the dead:
Behold if any pangs can equal mine.
And that of me some tidings thou mayest tell— 133
Bertram dal Bornio, be it known, am I,

---

107. Buondelmonte was engaged to a lady of the Amidei family, but broke his promise, and married one of the Donati. To avenge the insult, Mosca degli Uberti, or de' Lamberti, persuaded them to resolve on the assassination of Buondelmonte, exclaiming to them, "Cosa fatto ha capo"—a counsel which was the fatal source of the Guelf and Ghibiline factions.

134. Bertrand de Bornio, Viscount of Hautefort, a turbulent warrior and troubadour, made the young prince Henry ("Re Giovane") rebel against his father Henry II.

Who urged the youthful monarch to rebel.
Father and son at enmity I set;
Nor did Achitophel with arts more sly
David and Absalom's resentment whet.
Because the bonds by nature formed I burst, 139
My brain, alas! is severed from its source,
Which lies within this wretched trunk accurst:
Thus retribution doth pursue its course."

CANTO XXIX.

ARGUMENT.

Having passed by Geri del Bello, a relation of Dante, they proceeded into the tenth gulf, from which arise shrieks of woe, as from a hospital. Here are punished the Alchymists and Forgers.

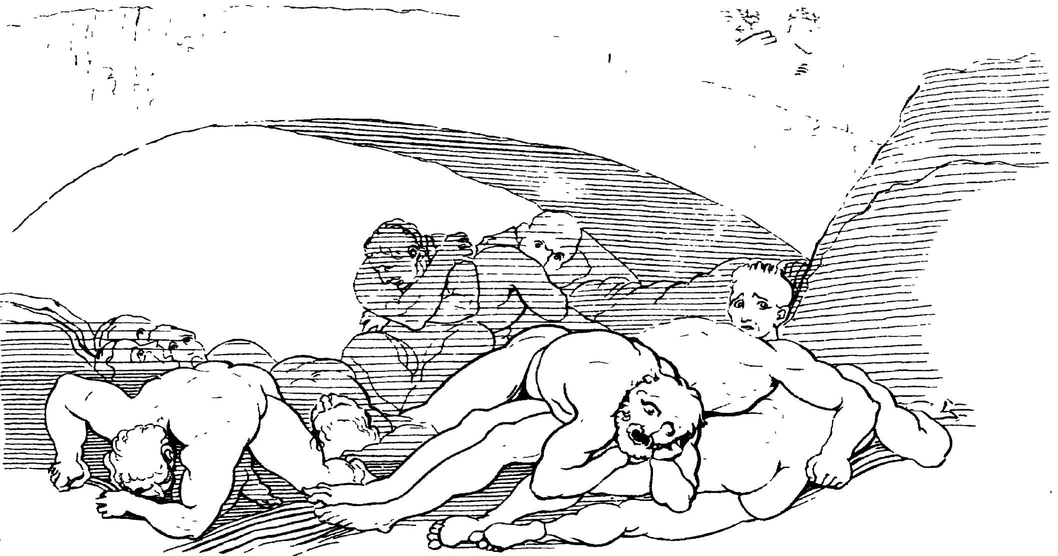
The numerous tribes and various gashes deep 1
With tears had so inebriated mine eyes,
I gladly would have stood awhile to weep;
But Virgil said to me; "Why gazing so?
Why fix thy looks in melancholy guise
On the disfigured shades that lie below?—
In former rounds thou wert not so inclined; 7
Wouldest thou desire to count their numbers o'er,
Think—two and twenty miles the vale doth wind.
Beneath our feet the moon hath hid her light;
Short is the time allotted us; and more
Than thou hast seen, as yet awaits thy sight."
"Did'st thou," I answered him, "the reason weigh, 13
Why such a close attention I bestowed,
Thou mightest perhaps have pardoned my delay."
My guide moved on, as I this answer gave,
Behind him still continuing my road,
And adding this; "I deem within that cave,
Whereon my eyes were fastened so intent, 19
A spirit dwells, to me by blood allied,
Who rues his dear-bought crimes with deep lament."
"Let not compassion for his woes detain
Thy pensive soul; but turn," exclaimed my guide,
"To other objects.—Let him there remain,
Whom at the bridge's foot I chanced to see, 25

Pointing and threatening thee with look enraged;
Geri del Bello, as I heard, was he:
With him, who erst in Altafort bore sway,
Thy thoughts so wholly were the while engaged,
That Geri passed unnoticed on thy way."
"His violent death, dear leader," I exclaim, 31
"Yet unavengéd on earth by those who shared,
And still remain partakers of the shame,
Inspired his indignation, so that he
In silence passed, nor to accost me cared;
Hence for his fate I feel more sympathy."
Thus we conversed until we reached the height 37
That to the very lowest depth would show
The neighbouring valley, were there stronger light.
When over the last cloister now we stood
Of Malebolge's gloomy circles, so
That its lay-brethren in the pit we viewed,
Discordant lamentations burst around, 43
Their shafts with pity barbed—whence I my hand
Upheld, to guard mine ears against the sound.
As were the wailings, if—when autumn reigns,
Each lazar house in sad Sardinia's land,
In Valdichiana, and Maremma's plains
Into one trench could all their sufferers pour, 49
Such here was heard; and fumes came forth as rank,
As issue from foul wounds, and festerings sore.
By the long cliff we made our downward way,
Still bearing to the left on this last bank:
Then more distinctly could mine eye survey
The deep abyss, where God's high minister, 55
Unerring Justice, punishes the crime,
And of the forgers keeps a register.
More grievous not, I deem, the sight to bear

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27. Geri was the son of Bello, brother to Bellincione, Dante's grandfather. He delighted in strife, and was slain by one of the Sacchetti family. His death, it seems, was at that time unavenged, contrary to the custom of those days. 28. Bertrand de Born: see last canto, line 134. 40. The monks of this last cloister are Demons. 48. In a valley of the Chiana, a river of that name formerly used to stagnate, before it was drained by the Emperor Leopold II. See Par. xiii. 23. Of Maremma, see xxv. 20.

THE VALE OF DISEASE



ONE ON ANOTHERS BREAST ONE ON THE BACK
RECUMBENT ONE ALL FOURS ENDURED HIS PAIN [illegible]

Of all Ægina's feeble race, what time
Malignity so deadly filled the air,
That every animal exhausted fell,
E'en to the little worm; when (such strange tale
As though 'twere very truth, the poets tell)
By seed of ants the nation was renewed;—
Than was my sorrow, when in that dark vale
The shades I saw, in numerous parcels strewed.
One on another's breast—one on the back
Recumbent,—one all fours endured his pain,
Slow crawling forward o'er the mournful track.
Step after step we went, nor held debate,
But gazed upon the sick, who all in vain
Strove their enfeebled forms to elevate.
I saw two sit, who back to back were put,
As pan props pan while heating on the fire,
With leprous blotch distained from head to foot.
No groom, who longs to hie him to his home,
Or hastens to fulfil his lord's desire,
E'er plied so rapidly the currycomb,
As each around him plied his nails amain;
So furious did the irritation seem;
And this the only aid they could obtain.
Thus the parched skin they drew off with the nail,
E'en as a knife scrapes off the coat from bream,
Or other fish that bears a larger scale.
Then did my guide, addressing one, begin:
" O thou, who to relieve thee from annoy,
Fixest thy nails like pincers in thy skin,
Tell me if any Latian soul there be
Among the numbers here?—to thy employ
So may thy nails suffice eternally."
" We, whom thou seest thus mangled, from the land
Of Latium came," cried one in tones of grief;
" But who art thou who makest the demand?"
My escort said: " One am I, who descend
To guide this living soul from reef to reef;
And e'en through hell to lead him I intend."
Then started they asunder at the word;
And, in alarm, each trembling turned to me,
With others who the echoed voice had heard.

Now drew the gracious master to my side,
And whispered: "Say to them what pleaseth thee."
I, thus beginning, with his wish complied:
"May your remembrance yet on earth survive, 103
Fresh in the thoughts of men, to your content,
Through many a year remaining still alive,
As ye may now your birth and race declare;
Nor let this foul disgusting punishment
Deter you from revealing who ye were."
"I from Arezzo came," one straight replied, 109
"And was by Albero of Siena burnt;—
Though sent not here for that for which I died.
'Tis true I did to him in joke profess
That I to wing my flight through air had learnt:
Vast were his wishes, but his wisdom less;
To learn my art was therefore his desire; 115
And since I made him not a Dædalus,
He had me burnt by his reputed sire.
But to the last dread chasm of all the ten
Unerring Minos doomed me, for my use
Of alchemy while living among men."
Then to the bard I said: "Now half so vain 121
Was ever nation as these Sienese?
Not e'en the French themselves I do maintain."
Whereat the other leper made reply:
"Stricca indeed excepted—if you please,
Who used the goods of life so temperately;
And Nicholas—whose art first mixed the fruit 127
Of cloves, prepared as a rich condiment,
Plucked from the garden where the plant takes root:
Excepting too that company renowned,
'Mongst whom his woods and vineyards Caccia spent;
And Abbagliato made his wit resound.
Would'st learn who backs thee 'gainst the Sienese? 133
Sharpen thy sight on me, that a reply

109. Griffolino, an alchymist of Arezzo, pretending to teach Albero, son of a Bishop of Siena, to fly, and failing in his promise, was accused by him of being a necromancer, and burnt alive. 125. One of a company of prodigal youths in Siena, who, with Caccia and others, sold their estates, built a palace, and ruined themselves by their extravagance. 132. Ironical. He is said to have been poor, and to have contributed his wit

My face may give; so shalt thou know with ease
Capocchio's shade now stands before thy sight,
Who metals could transmute by alchemy:
And thou, if I thy features scan aright,
Wilt know that Nature's practised ape am I." 130

CANTO XXX.

ARGUMENT.

In the same gulf are punished Impostors of various kinds, Coiners and Counterfeiters, who are afflicted with horrible diseases, fevers and dropsies. Gianni Schicchi, Sinon, and Adamo; between whom takes place a most comical dialogue.

When, wroth for Semele, the Theban maid, 1
Juno poured out her anger on the land—
Anger, the Goddess more than once displayed—
Such desperate phrenzy Athamas inflamed,
That when he saw his wife, in either hand
Bearing a child, infuriate he exclaimed:
"Extend the nets, that at the passage I 7
May seize the lioness and both her young."
Then, stretching forth his pitiless claws on high,
He seized Learchus; and against a stone,
Insensate—dashed him; while the mother sprung
Deep into ocean with her other son.—
Or when, bereft of her imperial sway, 13
Troy, once all daring, was in ruin laid,
Her king and kingdom wholly swept away—
The wretched Hecuba, sad, captive queen,
When she Polixena a corpse surveyed,
And on the margin of the deep had seen
Her Polydorus—mournful interview!— 19
In frenzy barked, e'en like a dog;—so great
The power of grief her reason to subdue.
But never Furies, whence soe'er they came,
Trojan, or Theban, with such rancorous hate
Tormented beasts, much less the human frame,—
As two pale naked spirits that I saw, 25
Who, like a hog excluded from the sty,
Came running furiously with open jaw.

4. See Ovid, Met. iv. 416—561

One seized Capocchio's neck, and rent him sore
  With fang infixed; then, as he drew him by,
  Grated his body o'er the rocky floor.
The Aretine, all trembling with alarm,
  Said: "Gianni Schicchi is yon goblin fell,
  Who roves infuriate, working other's harm."
"Oh," I exclaimed, "may ne'er the other sprite
  Mangle thy back, as thou grudge not to tell
  What is her name, ere hurried from our sight."
Then answered he: "Know, Myrrha is her name—
  That wicked one, who cherished in her breast
  For her own father an unhallowed flame
She came to perpetrate her deed of sin,
  Deceitfully in borrowed raiment dressed;
  Like him departing yonder; who, to win
The Lady of the herd, dared represent
  Buoso Donati, and upon him took
  To sign and seal a forged testament."
When that infuriate pair had onward passed,
  Whom I had scanned with such an eager look,
  Towards other ill-born souls mine eyes I cast.
One I beheld who like a lute was made,
  Had but the groin been amputated there
  Where in the human form the fork's displayed.
The dropsy, which with noxious humours charged,
  An ill proportion makes the body bear
  Unto the face, not equally enlarged,
Made him distend both lips;—as, parched within,
  One lip the hectic raises to his nose,
  Dropping the other downward to the chin.
"O ye," he said, "who free from punishment—
  (And why I know not)—to this realm of woes
  Are come,—behold, and be your ear attent
To master Adam's miserable strain.—

28. The alchymist mentioned in the last canto, line 136. 31. See last canto, line 109. 32. See line 42, &c. 42. Gianni Schicchi was a Florentine of the family of Cavalcanti,—so great a master in the art of counterfeiting, that when Buoso Donati was on his death-bed, leaving his property to charities, Gianni was requested by the son, Simon Donati, his intimate friend, to personate the dying man, and write a will in his favour; for which important service he received a most beautiful mare, "the lady of the herd," line 43. 61. Adamo was a Brescian, burnt

What I desired on earth, I compassed—all;
One drop of water now I crave in vain.
The rivulets, which from the verdant hills
Of Casentino into Arno fall,
Cooling the channels with their limpid rills,
Seem always in my sight; nor idly so,— 67
For their fond image more dries up my skin
Than all the torture my lean features show.
Stern Justice, racking me with inward throes—
E'en from the very region of my sin
Occasion takes to aggravate my woes:
There is Romena, where the coin I learnt 73
To forge, that John the Baptist's image bore;
For which offence my earthly frame was burnt:
But could the sight of Guido greet me here,
Or Alexander's hapless soul once more,
I'd change it not for Branda's fountain clear.
If the mad pacing spirits do not err, 79
One is e'en now this darksome pit within;
But fettered thus,—alas! how can I stir?
Where I so light that in a century,
One inch of progress towards him I could win,
Already on my journey should I be
In search of him among this people vile, 85
Although the vale in circuit doth embrace
Eleven miles,—in width is half a mile.
To them I owe this cursed society,
By them induced to stamp the florins base,
Mixed with three carats of alloy:" thus he.—
And I rejoined: "Who are that wretched pair 91
That on the right lie smoking, like a hand
In water steeped, and then exposed in air?"
"Since first I found them here," he said again,
"When down I fell to this ill-fated strand,
They ne'er have turned, nor will, while they remain:
One—the false dame who Joseph dared accuse; 97
Sinon the other—that false Greek from Troy:
Their burning fever doth this steam diffuse."

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for counterfeiting the coin of Florence, at the instigation of Guido Alessandro, and Aghinolfo, counts of Romena. See line 76, &c. 78. The fountain of Siena.

And one of them, who at this title rude
Experienced haply somewhat of annoy,
Struck with his fist the other's stomach crude,
That sounded like a drum:—with arm upreared, 103
Adam returned the blow upon his face,
Which no less hard than his own paunch appeared;—
Exclaiming: "Ha! although I am debarred
By these unwieldy limbs from change of place,
Still I've an arm for my defence prepared."
"Not quite so ready was it," he rejoined, 109
"When to the flames they bore you tightly bound,
Though still more ready was it when you coined."
He with the dropsy: "Now your speech is true;—
But not so true a witness were you found,
When of the truth at Troy they questioned you."
"If I spake false, you falsely coined," replied 115
Sinon,—"and here for but one fault am I,
While you for more than any fiend beside."
"Remember, perjured one, the horse at Troy,"
Answered the spirit of the stomach high;
"That *thou* art guilty knows each puny boy."
"Proof of *thy* guilt thy gaping mouth supplies," 121
The Greek retorted, "and that ample fount
Reared by thy tumid paunch before thine eyes."
The coiner then: "So runs your tongue—the same
To utter evil as 'twas ever wont;
And if I thirst, and moisture swells my frame,
Your head is racked by fever, and doth ache; 127
Nor pressing invitation would you need
Of fond Narcissus' mirror to partake."
Listening I stood intent, with all my mind,
When unto me the master said: "Take heed:
To quarrel with thee am I much inclined."
When I perceived him speak in angry strain, 133
I turned to him with such remorse, I deem
My mind for aye the impression will retain.
And like to one who dreams of miseries,
Which, as he dreams, he hopes may prove a dream,
And longs for that which all the time is his;—

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129. Narcissus fell in love with his own reflection in water.

So I, to whom my tongue its aid refused, 139
E'en by the wish to palliate what I had done,
Had unawares my own offence excused.
My master said: "Less shame would wash away
A far more heinous fault than thine, my son;
Then let no sorrow on thy spirit prey.
Consider I am always at thy side, 145
If e'er again thou happen to be placed
Where, in like strife, each other men deride:—
The wish to hear them marks a vulgar taste."

CANTO XXXI.

ARGUMENT.

Approaching the ninth circle, divided into four rounds, Dante fancies he sees it surrounded by lofty towers. Virgil undeceives him, and informs him they are giants. Nimrod, Ephialtes, Briareus. Antæus takes both the poets in his arms, and places them at the bottom of the circle.

The very tongue whose sharp rebuke had dyed 1
My either cheek with shame of crimson hue,
Itself, unasked, a remedy supplied.
Thus have I heard Achilles' lance possessed
A charmed power, as erst his father's too,
Inflicting wounds it presently redressed.
Turning our backs upon the vale of woe, 7
Mounted we then the circumambient height,
In silence leaving the abyss below.
Here less than day, and less than night we found;
So that not far could I extend my sight;
But through the gloom I heard a horn resound,—
Such as would make the loudest thunder hoarse; 13
Wherefore I turned mine eyes to whence it came,
Pursuing eagerly its awful course.
Not—that destructive day of carnage past,
When Charlemagne had lost his sacred aim—
Sounded Orlando such a fearful blast

1 Virgil had rebuked Dante for listening to the quarrel of Adamo and Sinon at the end of the last canto. 17. *i. e.* Had failed in his enterprise against the Saracens at Roncesvalles, when Orlando blew a blast with his horn which was heard by Charlemagne four miles off. See note next canto, line 122.

Thither not long had I upraised my head, 19
When many a lofty tower I seemed to view:
"O master, what new land is this?" I said.
"Athwart the dusky air so long the way,
Thy sight," he answered, "well may be untrue;
And hence imagination leads astray.
Thou wilt discover, if thou there arrive, 25
How much deceived by distance is the sense;
Wherefore to gain a nearer prospect strive."
Then lovingly he took me by the hand,
And said: "Ere we pursue our journey hence—
That this delusion thou mayest understand,
Know—giants these, not towers that meet thine eye: 31
All from the middle downward are immersed
Within the pit, around the bank on high."
As when a mist dispersing, melts away,
The eye by slow degrees takes in what first
Concealed within the lurid vapour lay;
Thus as I pierced the murky atmosphere, 37
Advancing nearer towards that circling bound,
My error fled, but soon was changed to fear;—
For, as above the wall that guards the place,
With lofty towers is Montereggion crowned,
So was the bank, which doth this gulf embrace,
By dreadful giants turreted on high; 43
Whose persons, half exposed, Jove's fiery dart
Still threatens, when he thunders through the sky.
Of one already I the face descried,
The shoulders, breast, and of the paunch a part;
And both the arms attached on either side.
Nature forsooth her wariness displayed 49
In discontinuing monsters such as these,
To rob fierce Mars of a superfluous aid;
And if she still allows her realms to teem
With elephants and whales—who clearly sees
Her counsels, will her wisdom more esteem:
For when the noble faculty of mind 55
To power is added, and to ill design,
No remedy can man against them find.

41. A castle near Siena.

His face as long, and e'en as wide methought,
As at St. Peter's is the brazen pine;
And in proportion all his limbs were wrought.
And thus the bank, which, from the waist below, 61
Girdled him round, so much above left seen,
That vainly would three Frieslanders bestow
Their pains to reach his hair: such was his size,
That thirty measured palms at least, I ween,
Appeared below where man his mantle ties.
Forth issued from the savage lips a cry: 67
"Raphegi mai amech izabi alm;"
For him became not sweeter harmony.
Towards him my guide; "Insensate spirit—rest;
Keep to thy horn; and let its music calm
The angry passions that disturb thy breast:
Look on thy neck; and thou the band wilt find 73
Which holds it, O thou frantic one!—behold!
Around thy mighty breast it is entwined."
To me he said: "Himself he hath accused;—
Nimrod is this, through whose ill scheme of old
One common language was no longer used.
There let him rest, nor speak to him in vain; 79
For even as he can no one understand,
So from his tongue can no one sense obtain."
Then bearing to the left we onward passed,
And found another still more fierce and grand,
About the distance that a sling could cast.
Who had the strength this giant huge to bind, 85
I know not;—but the left arm was in sight
Close pinioned in the front;—the right behind,
Girt with a chain, that from the neck around
His upper parts suspended, held them tight,
And five times o'er his monstrous body wound.
"In conflict with dread Jove, the sovereign lord, 91
This haughty one presumed to try his might,"
Exclaimed my guide, "and this is his reward:—

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59. The large bronze pine, which once ornamented the mole of Adrian, and in Dante's time, the belfry of St. Peter's, and is now in the garden of the Belvidere. 63. *i. e.* Standing upon one another. 68. Unmeaning sounds uttered by Nimrod, as though still confounded by the confusion of languages at Babel. 76. By his jargon.

His name Ephialtes:—when the giants made
The gods to tremble, great was he in fight:
Now moves he not the arms which then he swayed."
"Much could I wish, O master," I exclaim,
"If it be possible, that I might see
Briareus' huge immeasurable frame."
"Thou shalt behold," he said, "not far from this,
Antæus, who to speak and move is free;
He shall transport us to guilt's last abyss.
Far distant is the one thou would'st survey,
With fetters bound;—like him thou seest withal,
Though more ferocity his looks betray.
No earthquake ever shook so forcibly,
A mighty castle tottering to its fall,
As Ephialtes struggling to be free."
So awful ne'er till then did death appear;
And had the chains I saw, not checked my dread,
Life would have failed me through excess of fear.
We then proceeded on; and presently
We reached Antæus, who, besides his head,
Five ells at least towered o'er the cavity.
"O thou, who in that memorable field
Where valiant Scipio won a deathless name,
And Hannibal's proud host was forced to yield,
A thousand lions bore—thy prize—away;
And by whose aid, if we may trust to fame,
Hadst thou thy brethren joined in the affray,
The sons of Earth had gained the victory;—
Bear us below, where icy fetters bind
Cocytus' stream; nor our request deny,
Lest we to Tityus or to Typhon go:
See one to do thy bidding well inclined;
Wherefore curl not thy lip, but bend thee low:
On earth he still may renovate thy fame;
For yet he lives, and life hath yet in store,
Unless his spirit Grace should sooner claim."
Thus spake the guide:—him seized without delay

101. Because he did not join in the war against the gods (see line 120.) 115. The valley of the Bograda, near Carthage, where Antæus had hid his prey of lions in a cave, and fought with Hercules. 121. See Lucan, iv. 596.

The giant in his mighty hands, of yore
By Hercules experienced with dismay.
When Virgil felt his grasp, to me he said: 133
"Come, that my arms around thee I may twine;"
Then of himself and me one group he made.
As Carisenda, viewed by one below,
Seems, when a cloud flies o'er it, to incline
In opposite direction;—even so
To me appeared Antæus, as I stood 139
In wonder;—and so fearful was his guise,
I gladly would have gone some other road.
But in the abyss he lightly placed us, where
With Lucifer the traitor Judas lies:
Nor long inclining thus remained he there;
But rose, as from the deck a mast doth rise. 145

CANTO XXXII.

ARGUMENT.

The Ninth and last circle is divided into four rounds, of which two, viz. Cäina and Antenora, are here mentioned. In a lake of ice formed by the stagnant waters of Cocytus, are fixed the sinners, consisting, first of traitors to their kindred, and secondly, traitors to their country.

HAD I a rhyme so rugged, rough and hoarse, 1
As would become the sorrowful abyss,
Round which the rocky circles wind their course
Then with a more appropriate form I might
Endow my vast conceptions;—wanting this,
Not without fear I bring myself to write.
For no light enterprise it is, I deem, 7
To represent the lowest depth of all;
Nor should a childish tongue attempt the theme.
But may the heavenly Nine their aid afford,
By whom Amphion reared Thebes' lofty wall;
So that my words may with the fact accord.
Ill-fated dwellers in this sink forlorn, 13
Surpassing all in misery and woe,—

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[1]36. The leaning tower at Bologna, which has an inclination of seven feet.

Far better had ye sheep or goats been born!
Down in the gulf of darkness, black as night,
We stood, far sunk the giants' feet below;—
Upon the lofty wall still fixed my sight:
When, "Heed thy steps," a voice of warning said:
"And cautiously proceed, lest, as you pass,
On our unhappy brethren's heads you tread."
Wherefore I turned around, and saw before
And underneath my feet a lake like glass;
For not of ice the semblance that it bore.
Not Austrian Danube, in the winter driven
By bitter winds, so thick a crust doth wear;
Nor Tanais chilled beneath the inclement heaven:
For Tambernicchi falling down below,
Or Pietrepana hurled in ruin there,
Had not e'en cracked its margin with the blow.
As stands a frog—his mouth above the stream—
Croaking—in summer, when the village maid
(Her labour o'er) doth oft of gleaning dream;
So, wedged in ice, the wretched souls are bound;—
A livid hue their haggard looks betrayed:
Like storks, their teeth sent forth a chattering sound.
Downcast their looks;—how pinching was the cold
Their mouths bore ample proof; and from each eye
Might the dire anguish of their hearts be told.
When I awhile had turned my sight around,
Two shades I saw in such close company,
Their very locks together fast were bound.
"O ye united breast to breast," I said,
"Tell who ye are:"—whereat the neck they bent;
And when on me their looks were riveted,—
Their eyes, late moistened with the liquid tear,
O'erflowed the lids: then did the frost cement
The falling drops, and so detain them there.
Ne'er plank to plank could iron cramp unite
So closely;—like two mountain goats they plied,
Smiting each other from excess of spite.
And one, who from intensity of cold

28. A mountain of Sclavonia. 29. A mountain near Lucca.
52. Camicion de' Pazzi.—See line 68. He treacherously slew his kinsman Ubertino.

Had lost both ears, his face still stooping, cried:
"Say, wherefore us so earnestly behold?
Who are these two, if thou desire to know,— 55
They and their father Albert owned the glade
Through which Bisenzio's murmuring waters flow.
One mother bore them both;—thou mayest explore
Cäina through, nor meet a single shade,
Who, fixed in icy bonds, deserves them more;
Not him, whose breast and shadow at one blow 61
Were pierced by Arthur's hand; nor yet the knight
Foccaccia; nor even he, whose head doth so
Obstruct my vision that I cannot see;
And Sassol Mascheroni was he hight:
If thou art Tuscan, he is known to thee.
And that thou mayest not urge me more to say, 67
Know that Camicion Pazzi is my name,
Who waits till Carlin wipe his guilt away."
Then saw I thousand faces blue with cold;
Whence comes a deadly shiver o'er my frame,
Whene'er such icy shallows I behold.
While toward the centre we were journeying still, 73
To which all bodies naturally tend,
And I was trembling in the eternal chill;
Whether impelled by fate, desire, or luck,
I know not,—but, as 'mid their heads I wend,
The face of one my foot severely struck.
Weeping, he cried: "Wherefore thus crush my head?
Unless you mean the vengeance to improve 80
Of Montaperti—why so fiercely tread?

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55. The sons of Alberto Alberti, quarrelling about their patrimony, killed each other in single combat. They possessed the valley of Falterona, whence the Bisenzio flows into the Arno near Florence. 59. The first part of this circle takes its name from Cain. 61. King Arthur, discovering the traitorous intentions of his son Mordrec; pierced him with his lance in such a manner that, according to the romance of Launcilot, the sun shone through the wound. 63. Foccaccia de' Cancellieri, a Pistoian, cut off the hand of his cousin, and murdered his uncle; whence the factions of the Neri and Bianchi took their rise in Pistoia. 80. *i. e.* "Unless you come to add to the sufferings I am enduring for my treachery." Bocca degli Abbati is the speaker, who, having been corrupted by the Ghibelines, cut off the head of the standard bearer at the commencement of the battle, and by the confusion which ensued, led to the terrible defeat of the Guelfs at Mont' Aperti. See canto x. 85.

Then I: " O master, let me here remain,
That by his means my doubts I may remove;
No longer then will I thy steps detain."
The master stopped: whereat to him I cried
Who still was cursing loudly:—" What, I pray,
Art thou, that others dost so freely chide?"
" Nay, who art thou," he answered me again,
" Through Antenora causing such dismay?—
Wert thou alive I would not this sustain."
" Alive I am;—and if thou wish for fame,"
I answered, " it perhaps may give thee joy
'Mid other worthies to insert thy name."
" Quite the reverse what I desire," said he;
" So prithee hence, nor cause me more annoy;
Ill know'st thou here the art of flattery."
Then did I seize him by the scalp, and said:
" Now it behoves thee to declare thy name,
Or not a hair I'll leave upon thy head."
And he to me: " Then strip me of my hair:—
I ne'er will tell, or show thee who I am,
Although a thousand times my scalp thou tear."
Already in my hand his locks were bound,
And more than one of them were gathered;—he
Barking the while—his eyes upon the ground;
When cried another: " Bocca, art thou sane?
Sound not thy chattering teeth sufficiently,
But thou must bark? what devil gives thee pain?"
" Traitor accurst, be silent!"—I exclaim;
" For know—that back to earth of thee I'll bear
A true account, to thy eternal shame."
" Begone!" he cried, " and tell what tales you please;
But hence if you escape, his name declare,
Whose tongue but lately ran with so much ease.
Here he bewails the bribe of Frenchmen's gold.
' Him of Duera,' mayest thou say, ' I viewed,

89. This division is so called from Antenor, who, according to Dictys Cretensis, betrayed Troy to the Greeks. 106. See note, line 80. 116. " Buosso da Duera, of Cremona, bribed by Charles of Anjou, A.D. 1265, to surrender a pass entrusted to him by the Ghibelines, at which the people of Cremona were so enraged that they extirpated the whole family." Villani vii. 4.

Where sinners stand enshrined in icy cold.'
What others sojourn there, if asked to tell—
Him of Beccaria, at thy side, include,
On whom the avenging steel of Florence fell:
Gianni Soldanier, he beyond is hight,— 121
There Ganellon and Tribaldello, who
Betrayed Faenza's walls at dead of night."
Him having left, two spirits did I see
So frozen in one hole, that, to my view,
One's head the other's cowl appeared to be:
And like a famished man devouring bread,— 127
Thus, where the brain doth with the spine unite,
The upper one upon the under fed.
Not otherwise did Tydeus in disdain
Gnaw Menalippus' scalp, than, through despite,
He drove his teeth into the skull and brain.
"O thou," I said, "who show'st thy brutal hate 133
By such unheard of sign of cruelty,—
The reason why, on this condition state;
That if with justice thou such malice bear,—
Learning thy name, and his delinquency,
To earth returned, I may thy wrongs declare;
Unless the tongue with which I speak be dry." 139

CANTO XXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

Count Ugolino relates the cruel manner in which he and his sons were starved to death in the tower at Pisa, by the command of the Archbishop Ruggieri. In the third round of this ninth circle, called Ptolomea, are punished those who have betrayed their friends. Friar Alberigo, &c.

His mouth uplifting from the fell repast, 1
That vengeful sinner wiped it on the hair

119. An Abbot of Vallombrosa, beheaded for treachery. 122. Ganellon, or Gano, was the traitor who at Roncesvalles prevented Charlemagne going to assist Orlando, whose horn he heard. See note, last canto, line 17. Tribaldello de' Manfredi betrayed the city of Faenza during the night, to the French. 130. Tydeus, being mortally wounded at the siege of Thebes, is said to have thus exercised his revenge upon the head of his enemy. See Statius, Theb. viii. 740.

1. At the end of the last canto (line 124) two spirits were seen frozen in one hole—the one gnawing the other's skull. Dante asks the motives of this fierce enmity: and with his reply the canto opens.

Torn from that head all gnawed behind:—at last
He thus began: "Thou bidst me to renew
A grief that overwhelms me with despair,
E'en at the thought, ere I the tale pursue.
But if my words may, haply, prove the seed, 7
Whence infamy shall spring to him I rend,
Then will I speak, though tears my voice impede.
I know not who thou art, nor can divine
How to this nether world thou didst descend;
But from thy speech I judge thee Florentine.
Know then—Count Ugolino was my name; 13
Archbishop Ruggier this: now will I say
Why such close fellowship with him I claim.—
How by his treacherous designs it fell,
That, trusting in him, I was borne away,
And put to death—there is no need to tell:
But that which cannot have been heard by thee— 19
How cruel was my death—will I relate;
Then shalt thou know if he hath injured me.
Through a small loophole in that dismal cell,
The 'cell of hunger' called from my sad fate,
(And where some other yet is doomed to dwell)
Full many moons had shed their broken light, 25
When o'er me came that evil-omened sleep,
Which all unveiled the future to my sight.
This traitor seemed, as huntsman, to pursue
The He-wolf and his young ones to that steep
Which shuts out Lucca from the Pisan's view.
Lean hounds, well trained, and eager for the chase— 31
The Gualands, with the Sismonds and Lanfrancs,—
Before him he let slip.—In little space

13. Count Ugolino della Gherardesca, chief of the Guelfs in Pisa, by a series of treasons had made himself master of that city. Ruggieri degli Ubaldini, Archbishop of that state, and chief of the Ghibelines, by similar means, had ruined the Count; and having seized him with four of his children or grandchildren, left them to perish by famine in prison. 26. Count Ugolino, after being imprisoned several months, sees in a dream his coming fate foreshadowed. The Archbishop ("this traitor") appears as a huntsman pursuing him to Mount Juliano, between Lucca and Pisa. 29. Count Ugolino is called a wolf, as being a Guelf. 31. The Ghibelines, his pursuers, adherents of the Archbishop, are described as hounds.

The father and his sons, as though forespent,
Lagged in the course; and then their heaving flanks
Methought by those infuriate tusks were rent.
When I awoke, ere morn its rays had shed, 37
I heard my sons, who with me were confined,
Sob in their slumbers, and cry out for bread.
Full cruel art thou, if thou canst conceive
Without a tear what then came o'er my mind!
And if thou grieve not, what can make thee grieve?
'They were awake; and now the hour drew near, 43
Which had been wont to bring their scant repast;
And each was pondering o'er his dream of fear,—
When from within the dreadful tower I heard
The entrance underneath with nails made fast!—
I gazed upon my boys—nor spake a word.
I wept not, for my heart was turned to stone;— 49
My children wept;—and little Anselm cried:
'What ails thee, Father? strange thy looks are grown.'
Yet still I wept not—still made no reply
Throughout that day, and all the night beside,
Until another sun lit up the sky.
But, when a faint and broken ray was thrown 55
Within that dismal dungeon, and I viewed
In their four looks the image of my own,—
Then both my hands through anguish did I bite;
And they, supposing that from want of food
I did so—sudden raised themselves upright,
And said: 'O Father, less will be our pain, 61
If thou wilt feed on us: thou gav'st us birth;—
Be thine to take this wretched flesh again.'
Then was I calm, lest they the more should grieve.
Two days we all were silent.—Cruel earth,
O wherefore didst thou not beneath us cleave?
'To the fourth day had been prolonged our woe, 67
When at my feet sank Gaddo on the floor,
Saying: 'O Father; why no aid bestow?'
He died;—and, as distinct as here I stand,
I saw the three fall one by one, before

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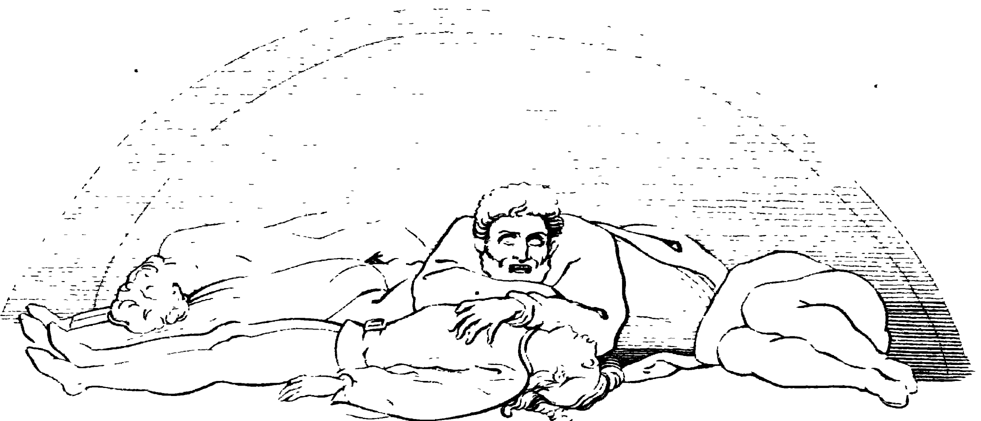
47. The word "chiavare," in the Paradiso (canto xix. 105), is used to express the nailing our Saviour to the cross.

The sixth day closed;—then, groping with my hand,
I sought each wretched corse, for sight had failed; 73
Two days I called on those who were no more;
Then hunger—stronger e'en than grief—prevailed."
This said—askance his vengeful eyes were thrown,
And with his teeth the skull again he tore,
Fierce as a dog to gnaw the very bone.
Ah Pisa! the disgrace of that fair land 79
Where "*Si*" is spoken; since thy neighbours round
Take vengeance on thee with such tardy hand—
To dam the mouth of Arno's rolling tide,
Capraia and Gorgona, raise a mound,
That all may perish in the waters wide!
Thou modern Thebes! what, though, as fame hath said,
Count Ugolino did thy forts betray,— 86
His sons deserved not punishment so dread.
Brigata, Ugueccion, and that sad pair
My song hath told of—innocent were they;
Their tender years should have inclined to spare.
We then arrived, as we pursued our track, 91
Where bonds of ice confine another class,
Not looking down, but stretched upon the back:
Their very tears forbid their tears to flow;
And grief, unable through their eyes to pass,
Turns itself inward to increase their woe.
Forming a cluster, the first tears unite, 97
Which thus, like crystal vizors to behold,
Fill all the cup that holds the ball of sight.
And though, like one to all impressions dead,
And callous grown, I was benumbed with cold,
So that sensation from my face had fled,—
Still as it seemed to me, some wind prevailed; 103
Whereat I said, "O master, whence this wind?
Methought, at such a depth all vapour failed."

80. [illegible] Where the affirmative "Si," "yes," is used. 83. Two [illegible], not far from the mouth of the Arno, on which Pisa is situated. 86. Pisa is likened to Thebes from the cruelties of which it was the scene. 88. Brigata and Ugueccion are the two children who, besides Anselm and Gaddeo, were starved to death with Ugolino. 105. As winds are caused by the sun, Dante is surprised that in this sunless abyss, any winds should prevail; and is told that he will soon find that the wind is caused by Lucifer's wings.

UGOLINO

12



"THERE GROPING, WITH MY HANDS
I SOUGHT EACH WRETCHED CORSE FOR SIGHT HAD FAILED" Inf XXXIII 72

"Soon shall we be," he answered, "where thine eye
The reason of this cutting blast shall find,
And of itself afford thee a reply."
Then one, his grief in frozen crust confined, 109
Exclaimed: "O souls, so cruel though you be,
Since to the lowest place ye are assigned,
Raise from my face the rigid veil I feel,
That I may vent in tears my agony
A moment's space, ere they again congeal."
Then I: "If thou would'st bid my heart relent, 115
Say who thou art—and, if denied thy suit,
Down to the lowest ice may I be sent."
"Friar Alberigo is my name," he said,
"Who from the evil garden plucked the fruit;
And here my fig is with a date repaid."
"What! art thou numbered with the dead?" I cried.
"How on the earth above my body fares— 122
That knowledge I possess not," he replied;
"For souls oft hither come, by vengeance driven,
(Such privilege this Ptolomea shares)
Ere Atropos the fatal stroke hath given:
And that more gladly thou mayst wipe away 127
The crystal tears congealed upon my face,
Know—soon as doth the soul, like mine, betray,
Its body by a demon is possessed,
By whom 'tis governed, till it fill the space
On earth allotted to its course unblest.
The soul descends to such a cistern here; 133
And still perhaps on earth the body's seen
Of the sad shade which winters in my rear.
If lately thou camest hither, thou must know,

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110. Virgil and Dante are taken for spirits proceeding to punishment in the nethermost abyss. 118. Alberigo de Manfredi of Faenza, feigning a wish to be reconciled to some of his brotherhood, the Frati Gaudenti, invited them to a banquet. At the conclusion, he called for the fruit, which was the signal for assassins to rush in and murder his guests. Hence one who had been stabbed was proverbially said to have tasted Friar Alberigo's fruit. The "ill garden" is Faenza. 126. The souls of these traitors are supposed to be precipitated into hell the moment their treachery is committed, and their bodies to be simultaneously possessed by a devil, who inhabits them during the remainder of their natural life.

He is Ser Branca D'Oria whom I mean;—
For many years hath he been here below."
Then I: "Thou fain would'st dupe me, as I guess,
For Branca D'Oria surely is not dead,
But eats, and drinks, and sleeps, and dons his dress."
"Ere to the trench above of Malebranche,
Where ever boils the adhesive pitch," he said,
"Had yet arrived the hapless Michael Zanche,
This D'Oria's form a devil did assume;
His kinsman too—leagued in the treacherous plot—
Participated in his wretched doom.
But come—extend thy hand this way to me;
Open my eyes."—His eyes I opened not;
Rudeness to him were fairest courtesy.
Ah Genoese, of every grace devoid!
So full of all malevolence and guile,
Why are ye not at one fell swoop destroyed?
For with Romagna's spirit most accurst
A countryman of your's I found—so vile,
That in Cocytus is his soul immersed,
Although his body roams on earth the while.

CANTO XXXIV.

ARGUMENT.

Description of Lucifer, surrounded with ice in the very centre of the earth, or lowest depth of hell.—The traitor Judas Iscariot, Brutus, Cassius.—Passing the centre, the poets ascend to the other hemisphere, and again obtain a sight of the stars.

"Lo, come the banners of the king of hell!"
My master said: "then forward stretch thine eye,
And, if thou canst—behold the monarch fell."
Like to a windmill, in the distance seen

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137. One of the celebrated family of the Doria in Genoa.—He murdered his father-in-law, Michael Zanche (mentioned canto xxii. 88), in order to obtain his possessions. 143. See canto xxi. 7. 154. With the [illegible] Alberigo.

1. [illegible] line is a parody on the first verse of a Latin hymn, sung by the [illegible] in praise of the Cross, "Vexilla regis prodeunt,"—Dante having added "inferni," in order to apply it to the "king of hell," now about to appear.

DIS, OR LUCIFER



Whirling about, when night enwraps the sky,
Or dense and murky vapours intervene;—
Such was the structure I now seemed to view: 7
Whereat to shun the blast, behind my guide,
For want of other shelter, I withdrew.
Now came we—and I pen the verse with fear—
Where all the shades beneath the frozen tide
Transparent shone, like straws in crystal clear.
Some prostrate—others upright I observed, 13
One on his head, and one upon his feet;
Another's figure like a bow was curved.
When we had made such progress on our way,
That to my kind instructor it seemed meet,
The Creature, once so beauteous, to display;—
Standing aside, he made me halt,—and cried: 19
"Now Dis behold!—be thine, in this dread spot
A heart of firmest courage to provide."
How hoarse and icy cold I then became—
Demand not, reader, since I write it not;
For all description would be weak and tame.
I died not;—nor was life within me left; 25
Imagine then, if fancy you possess,
What I became, of either state bereft.
Above the ice upreared his bust on high
The Monarch of that region of distress;
And nearer to a giant's height am I,
Than to his arms are giants:—now compute, 31
How vast the magnitude the whole must be,
Which to a portion so immense could suit.
If he were beauteous once, as now debased,—
Yet in his pride transgressed his Sire's decree,
Well may all evil unto him be traced.
O what a prodigy he seemed, to view! 37
For on his head three faces were upreared;
The one in front of a vermilion hue:
The other two, above each shoulder blade,

8. The wind is produced by the flapping of Lucifer's wings. See line 51.
18. Lucifer or Satan,—once an angel of light; here called Dis. See Paradise xix. 47. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, Son of the Morning! yet shalt thou be brought down to Hell, to the sides of the pit."—Isaiah xiv. 12.

United closely to the first appeared;
And at the crest all three a junction made.
Somewhat 'twixt white and yellow was the right; 43
The left, to look at, was like those who dwell
Where Nile descends from Ethiopia's height.
Two mighty wings extended under each,
Which to a bird so monstrous suited well;
Nor e'er beheld I sails such distance reach.
Plumes had they none; but in their texture they 49
Were like a bat's; which, flexible and thin,
Produced three winds by their incessant play,
And froze Cocytus' lowest depth profound.
The six eyes wept; and o'er his triple chin
The tears and bloody foam poured fast around.
At every mouth his teeth a sinner tore, 55
E'en like a mill; so that within his jaws,
Were three of them at once tormented sore.
To him in front, this crushing was but play,
Compared with what he suffered from the claws,
Which from his back oft tore the skin away.
"That one above," to me the master said, 61
"Is Traitor Judas, doomed to greater pangs:—
His feet are quivering, while sinks down his head
Of the other two, whose heads are plunged below,
Brutus the one, who from the black throat hangs;
See how he writhes, yet speaks not in his woe!—
Cassius the other, with such strength endued. 67
But night returns; and from the abyss of hell
'Tis time we went, since all hath now been viewed."
My master bidding, I his neck ascended;
Then, judging both his time and distance well,
He, when the monster's pinions were extended,
Attached him closely to the shaggy side, 73
And made from lock to lock his downward way,
Between the frozen crusts, and rugged hide.
When we had clambered down to where the thigh
Doth on the swelling of the haunches play,
My guide with much fatigue and urgency

65. Brutus is particularly instanced, as being the murderer of Cæsar, by whom was founded that monarchy which Dante looked up to as the means under Providence of governing the whole world.

To where his feet had been moved round his head, 79
And, like to one who mounts, clung to the hair ;—
So that to hell again, methought, we sped.
Then panting, as a man forespent with toil,
My master said: "Hold fast; for by such stair
Must we escape from this accursed soil."
Through hollow rock then issued forth my guide, 85
And on the brink providing me a seat,
Sate himself down with caution by my side.
I raised my eyes ;—nor change did I expect
To find in Lucifer ;—when lo, his feet,
That late hung down, were seen in air erect!
And how I then with trouble was overcast, 91
Let grosser minds imagine—not with sense
Endowed to mark the point which I had past.
Now spoke the master: "Rise—no more delay—
Long is the road and rough that leadeth hence;
And Phœbus soon will wake the early day."
No royal path was that on which we were, 97
But wrought by nature, savage, wild, and rude;
Nor was there aught but troublous twilight there.
"Ere we depart from the abode of woe,
Master," I said, when on my feet I stood,
"Lest I in error stray, some words bestow.
Where is the ice ?—and wherefore is his head 103
Fixed upside down? and tell the reason why
From night to morn the sun so soon hath sped."
Then he: "Thou dost imagine we are still
On the other side the central point, where I
Clasped the earth-piercing Worm, fell cause of ill.
So far as I continued to descend, 109
That side we kept; but when I turned, then we
Had passed the point to which all bodies tend.
Now art thou come the hemisphere beneath
Opposed to that which forms earth's canopy;
Under whose highest cope poured forth his breath
The man who sinless lived and sinless died. 115

93. The centre of the universe and of gravity. 108. The great dragon or old serpent, "called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world." Rev. xii. 9. 111. See line 95. Mark Dante's knowledge of this law of gravity.

Thy feet upon a little sphere are placed:
Its other front is on Judecca's side.
Morn rises here, when it is evening there;
And he, whose locks to aid us we embraced,
Remains still fixed, as when he formed our stair.
Hither he fell from heaven, what time forsook 12
Its place, through dread of him, the dry land here,
And 'neath the veil of ocean, refuge took,
And reached our hemisphere:—so, through like dread,
The earth here sinking down, did disappear,
And, there exalted, lifted up its head.
As far from Beelzebub as the profound 127
Abyss is deep, a place there is below,
Not known by sight, but only by the sound
Caused by a rivulet that downward borne
In gentle windings, by its constant flow
A channel in the stony rock hath worn."
My guide and I this secret pathway chose, 133
To reconduct us to the world of light;
And up we journeyed, heedless of repose,
He mounting first, while I his steps pursued;—
Till, through an orifice, heaven's splendours bright
Burst on mine eyes:—emerging thence, we viewed
The stars once more unfolded to our sight. 139

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117. The circle of Judas, through which Dante had just passed.—Treachery, as instanced in Lucifer and Judas, who are coupled together, is punished in the lowest depth of hell, as the most abominable of crimes. 120. Half his body remained on one side the centre of the earth, and half on the other side. 123. The shock given to the earth by his fall drove a portion of the waters of the ocean to the southern hemisphere. 125. The same shock caused a depression on one side of the globe, and an elevation on the other. Upon this mountain, uncovered by the sea, Dante places his Purgatory. 127. Dante now speaks: "Beyond Beelzebub or Lucifer, *i. e.* on the other side of the centre extends a rocky path, equal to the depth of hell, or the semi-diameter of the earth, so dark as to be only discoverable by the sound of a rivulet which runs through it." Up this rude path, or water course, the poets proceed to the surface of the opposite hemisphere, and again obtain a sight of the stars. 133. "In these last verses, after the sorrow that pervades this part of the poem, begins to breathe a sweetness which prepares the soul for that calm deligh with which it will be soothed from the first to the last verse of the succeeding canticle."—*Ugo Foscolo, Discorso.*

END OF INFERNO.

THE PURGATORIO.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PURGATORIO.

In his pilgrimage through the Inferno, Dante represented sinners, immersed in darkness and misery, as one vast kingdom of the dead.—He now proceeds to describe another state of existence, wherein those who desire to enjoy the light of true religion submit themselves to its remedial discipline. For the purpose of exhibiting this "second kingdom" in an allegorical form, agreeably to his general design, he adopts the prevailing idea of Purgatory, which his imagination bodies forth as a lofty mountain, where souls, in the course of a toilsome ascent, are purified from sin, and fitted to enter the heavenly mansions.* This mountain, clothed with the rays of the Sun of righteousness, he had seen afar off, when he first awoke to a sense of his miserable condition in the wilderness of sin. To climb its steep and rugged sides is the task to which the pilgrim now applies himself.

In the lower region at the foot of the mountain, are found indolent spirits, who are doomed to wander thirty times as long as they delayed repentance, before they are admitted within the gate of Purgatory.† During this period they are placed under the superintendence of Cato of Utica,‡ a venerable old man, who appears to be introduced as a personification of self-control, or that true liberty, which consists in a perfect mastery over the passions. Among the spirits in these outskirts of Purgatory the poet spends a considerable time; and eight cantos are occupied in relating the various incidents that occur. In the ninth canto, Lucia or Grace, who originally interested herself in obtaining for our poet the aid of Beatrice and Virgil, during the night assists Dante up the steep to the entrance of Purgatory;§ when the Angel who

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* At first sight reference appears to be made solely to the world of spirits. That Dante, however, had a more useful object in view, and intended to represent the inhabitants of earth, is evident, when he himself tells us that "the whole poem may be considered as an allegory of man in his capacity as a free agent, of meriting reward or punishment."—*Dedication of the Paradiso.*

† Canto iii. 140. ‡ Ib. i. 31. § Ib. ix. 55.

guards the gate imprints on his forehead seven P's, as the mark of seven sins, from which he is to purify himself in the seven rounds of the mountain.

Admitted within the gate of Purgatory,* the poets proceed upward by a narrow way to the first circle or ledge. In this, Pride is punished with severe inflictions; and on the sides of the marble rock are displayed examples of Humility—wrought by Dante in so striking and picturesque a manner, as to show most forcibly the peculiar skill of the imaginative sculptor. The remaining six circles, each devoted to the punishment of a particular vice, occupy several cantos. The fourteenth is distinguished for the bitter sarcasm and heart-felt sorrow with which the poet laments the degeneracy of Italy.

Having effaced the stains of vice, and passed through the purifying fire, Dante is carried up a lofty stair to the summit of the mountain. A new scene here opens before us.†– The garden of Eden is discovered in all its pristine beauty—lovely and deserted, as it is supposed to have remained since the expulsion of our first Parents, and waiting in readiness to receive the Daughter of Jerusalem, on her descent from Heaven, and to admit the redeemed into the presence of their King, upon his holy mountain of Zion. A description of the terrestrial Paradise follows,—the living verdure of the forest tempering the fervour of the early day—the leaves trembling before the soft impulse of a gentle wind—while the birds in many a throng are joyfully hailing the matin hour. And, as if Dante was determined to embellish this part of his poem with all the most soothing ideas that nature suggests, the river Lethe is seen running through the meadow,—with its gentle wave bending down the grass that springs at its side, and—beyond all compare with earthly streams—clear and transparent:—

> "And yet it moved in darkness on its way,
> Dark, in the depth of that perpetual shade."‡

On the other side of the river, a lady now appears, walking alone, and singing, as she culls the flowers that adorn her path. The poet asks her the purport of her song, when Matelda replies, that she is rejoicing in the works of her

* Canto x. 1. † Ib. xxviii. ‡ Ib. xxviii. 31.

Creator* and, in answer to further inquiries, proceeds to explain, that the works of nature in this holy place are subject to no such irregularities as prevail on earth—that the flowers and trees grow spontaneously—that the two streams, Lethe and Eunoë, are not replenished by the uncertain supplies of rain, but issue from a never-failing source; endued—the one with power to take away all memory of sin—the other, to call each virtuous deed to mind.

Following Matelda along the opposite bank of the stream, Dante has not proceeded far, when the forest is suddenly illuminated, and a sound of melody runs through the glowing air. Contemplating these "primæval fruits of the eternal Love," he advances onward, till in the objects, whose dazzling splendour at first eluded his sight, he is able to distinguish seven candelabra, and in the music recognizes the song "Hosanna," proclaiming the approach of our Saviour and the Bride. A procession advances, consisting of Saints arrayed in white, and Elders crowned with lilies. A triumphal car follows, representing the chair of St. Peter, or the pure and primitive Church, before it was changed by Papal corruptions,—drawn, as afterwards appears, by a Griffon, in its two-fold nature emblematical of our Saviour, and surrounded by four Cherubim. Rapt thus into the loftiest visions, Dante places before our eyes with surprising distinctness the mysterious images of Ezekiel and St. John. Beatrice at last appears, descending from Heaven, veiled in white, like the sun shrouded in a silver mist, and encompassed by a cloud of flowers, showered down upon her by angelic hands.† At the sight of his long lost Lady, from whom he had at times suffered himself to be led astray, the poet is struck with awe, and acknowledges the full force of his ancient flame.

In the mean time Virgil departs; when Dante, giving way to despair, is checked by Beatrice, who calls to him by name —"Dante, weep not;" and tells him that he has greater cause for tears than the departure of Virgil.—Assuming a disdainful air, she reproaches him with tardiness in seeking the beautiful mountain, and suffering himself to be drawn away from his "first love." "If," she says, "at my decease you were bereaved of the fairest form that nature or art ever

* Canto xxix. 80. † Ib. xxx. 13. 22.

designed, it became you not to have stooped to delusive attractions, but rather to have soared upwards, and contemplated me in my more exalted state."

> "As little children with their eyes bent low,
> Stand listening—mute through consciousness of shame,
> Convicted and repentant;—*

Even so stood Dante;—when Beatrice, perceiving him thus afflicted at merely hearing her words, desires him to look up, and complete the measure of his penitence. The Angels ceasing to sprinkle the flowers which fell around her—he is enabled to obtain a clearer view of the heavenly Maid; and at the sight is so stung with remorse, that he declares his detestation of all earthly allurements.—Recovering from a swoon into which he has fallen, he is led to the river Lethe by Matelda. After immersion, he is allowed to gratify his longing eyes with a nearer contemplation of Beatrice, arrayed all the charms of her second beauty.†

The last two cantos are mainly occupied with an account of the allegorical procession before mentioned advancing to the foot of a wide-spreading tree situated in the midst of the garden. Various mysterious events are there exhibited; when our Saviour and the Angels return to Heaven.‡ Beatrice informs Dante that he will not now remain long in the garden, but rejoin her after death in the kingdom of Zion;§ that at present he must watch the changes which the car or Church is destined to undergo, and record them, on his return to earth, for the benefit of mankind.

After meeting with various disasters, the Church, which in its primitive state had been adorned with all virtues and Christian graces, is corrupted through the wealth and temporal dominion acquired by the Roman Bishops. Under their usurped authority the sacred edifice is completely transformed,‖ to the great grief of Beatrice; who, witnessing their intrigues with the Kings of the Earth, as foretold in the Apocalypse, predicts the downfall of corruption by the immediate agency of our Saviour or his Angel.¶ The poet is then led by Matelda to the river Eunoë, whence he returns with invigorated powers, and with a capacity of soaring to the stars.

* Canto xxxi. 64. † Ib. xxxi. 138. ‡ Ib. xxxii. 89.
§ Ib. 100. ‖ Ib. 147. ¶ Ib. xxxiii. 43.

To form an idea of the construction of Dante's Purgatory, the reader must imagine—rising out of the sea a lofty mountain in the form of a cone, round which run seven circles or ledges, gradually diminishing in circumference. Being the reverse of the Inferno, an inverted cone would represent its figure.

The seven circles are appropriated to the punishment of their several crimes, commencing with the greater crimes, in opposition to the Inferno, which commences with the less. In a similar way, however, is contrived a graduated scale of punishment,—the circles becoming more and more contracted in their circumferences, as also rising to a greater altitude At the highest point is situated the garden of Eden, from which the Poet ascends to the celestial Paradise.

PURGATORIO.

CANTO I.

ARGUMENT.

Dante meets with Cato of Utica; described as a most venerable old man, to whose care the spirits in Purgatory are consigned. By his recommendation, Virgil girds Dante with a reed, as a sign of humility, and cleanses him with drops of dew.

O'ER the smooth waters of a milder sea 1
The light bark of my genius hoists her sail,
Leaving behind the flood of misery:
For now that second kingdom claims my song,
Wherein is purified the spirit frail,
And fitted to rejoin the heavenly throng.
Wake into life the deadened notes again, 7
O ye most holy Nine! since your's I am;
And let Calliope exalt the strain,
Following my verse with that extatic sound,
Which to the wretched Picæ when it came,
Dashed all their hopes of pardon to the ground.
Sweet colours that with orient sapphire shone, 13
Collected in the tranquil atmosphere,
Far as the highest circle's purer zone,

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1. Dante, having left behind him the "cruel sea" of the Inferno, prepares to sail over the milder waters of the Purgatorio. The metaphor is continued in the Paradiso, canto ii. 1. 7. Dante's muse had hitherto been employed in singing of Hell, "the kingdom of the dead." "The style of the poet immediately assumes a splendour and a serenity adapted to his subject. His metaphors are all taken from smiling objects." Ginguenè Hist. Lit. d'Italie, c. ix.—"Hence that calm delight with which the soul will be soothed from the first to the last of this canticle."—Ugo Foscolo, Discorso. 11. The Picæ, daughters of Pierius, having challenged the Muses to sing, were defeated, and changed into magpies for their presumption. 13. Dante describes his entrance into the confines of Purgatory, before daybreak, when the sky began to be streaked with light. The purity of the atmosphere is contrasted with the deadly air of the Inferno. 15. Translated on the authority of Lombardi.

Enjoyment to my weary eyes restored,
Soon as I issued from that stagnant air
Which o'er my sight and breast such sorrow poured —
The beauteous Star, to love and lovers dear,
Was making all the Orient laugh ;—so bright,
She veiled the Pisces, who attended near,—
When to the other pole mine eyes I turned,
And there beheld four planets on the right,
By none save those in Paradise discerned :
Heaven seemed to view their lustre with delight.
O northern region, how bereaved art thou,
These starry splendours banished from thy sight !
When from their radiance I had turned my head
Back to the northern hemisphere, whence now
The constellation of the Wain had fled—
Near me I saw an aged man alone,
Whose look inspired devotion more profound
Than to his father ever owed a son.
His beard was long, and intermixed with grey,
Which falling with the hoary locks around,
In double tresses on his bosom lay.
So brightly o'er his face with heavenly light
Did those four hallowed stars their lustre shed,
Methought the sun was beaming on his sight.
" Tell who are ye, that stemming the dark tide,
Have 'scaped the eternal prison of the dead ?"
Moving his venerable locks, he cried :—

23. These stars being in the antarctic pole, could not be seen except in the southern hemisphere. But Purgatory being antipodal to Jerusalem, according to our poet's supposition, and the terrestrial Paradise situated on the summit of the mountain, these stars would be visible to our first parents, before the fall. Being symbolical of the four cardinal virtues, (Prudence, Justice, Temperance and Fortitude,) they could only be seen by man in a state of innocency, and hence the lamentation that follows, addressed to the widowed inhabitants of the northern pole, *i. e.*, to those in the Inferno. 31. Cato of Utica;—selected for his office by the poet in imitation of Virgil. Æn. viii. 670, " Secretosque pios, his dantem jura Catonem." That Dante entertained the highest opinion of him is evident from his Convito. " What mortal man was more worthy to follow God than Cato ? Certainly no one." Again : " O most holy breast of Cato, who shall presume to speak of thee ?" 40. *i. e.* The dark winding rivulet against which the poets made their way up from Hell, " the eternal prison." See Inf. xxxiv. 1[illegible].

"Who was the guide and lantern to your track, 43
When forth from that profoundest night ye came
Which makes the infernal vale for ever black?—
Thus broken are the laws that govern Hell?
Or are Heaven's counsels now no more the same,
That, though accurst, ye dare approach my cell?"
Instant my guide drew near,—and both by sign, 49
And by injunction, and by counsel given,
In reverence made my eyes and knees incline;
Then said: "I came not of my own accord;—
At HER request who dwells enthroned in heaven,
To this lone wanderer guidance I afford.
But since more fully thou would'st fain be told 55
The reason of our toilsome journey here,
'Tis not for me such knowledge to withhold—
Never hath he beheld life's latest eve;
But Folly drew him to that term so near,
Scarce had he time his error to retrieve.
In this extremity I brought him aid, 61
As hath been told thee; nor was other way
Discovered, save the one I have essayed.
Him have I led throughout the realms of woe;
And now, the spirits, who beneath thy sway
Perfection seek, my purpose 'tis to show.
'Twere long to tell how I have lured him on: 67
From heaven descends the grace which brings him here
To list thy words, and look thy face upon.
Let him from thee a gracious welcome find:
He comes in search of Liberty: how dear
She is, he knows who life for her resigned;—
Thou knowest,—who for her could'st death despise 73
In Utica, where erst was doffed by thee
The vest that shall hereafter glorious rise.
By us unbroken are the laws of Hell;
For he still lives, and Minos binds not me;
But in that circle 'tis my lot to dwell,

43. "Thy word is a lantern unto my feet, and a light unto my paths."—Psalm cxix. By "profoundest night" is meant the inveterate habit of sin. By the valley, "the vale of woe." Inf. iv. 7. 53. Beatrice. 76. Virgil having answered two of Cato's questions, now answers the third, line 46. "My companion is still alive; and I, though a spirit, am not subject to Minos the judge of Hell." (Inf. v. 4.)

Where the chaste eyes of thy loved Marcia still 79
Entreat thee, holy one! to call her thine:
Then, by her love, incline thee to our will.
Through thy seven kingdoms suffer us to go;
And I will thank her for the deed benign,
If thou disdain not to be named below."
"So pleasing was my Marcia to my sight," 85
He answered me, "while I on earth remained,
That all she wished I granted with delight.
Now, since she dwells beyond the evil tide,
She may not move me; so the law ordained,
When I departed from the other side.
But if the mandate of a heavenly Dame 91
Direct thy steps, no need of flattery;
Sufficient that thou ask me in her name.
Go then, and gird him with a simple reed,
And to his face the cleansing dew apply,
So that from every stain he may be freed:
For not, while any dimness clouds his eyes, 97
Could he by that great Minister be seen
Who watches here, and is of Paradise.
Around this islet coast, down, down below,
Where dash the waters on the margin green,
Such reeds amid the slime are wont to grow:
No plant, producing leaves, can there survive; 103
None there, whose hardened stem disdains to bend
Before the beating wave, remains alive.
Not by this way your homeward journey lies;—
The rising sun will aid you to ascend
The hallowed mountain at an easier rise."
This said he vanished:—I uprose in haste, 109
Uttering no word, and drew unto my guide,

i. e. am not condemned to Hell, but resident in Limbo. 79. See Lucan, Phars. ii. 344. 82. Cato, by way of compliment, is said to be intrusted with the care of the circles of Purgatory, his government being in reality confined to the outskirts of Purgatory, which itself is guarded by an angel. See canto ix. 103. 88. The river Acheron. —The "law" is the change of affection ordained to accompany change of place. Cato is supposed to be among those spirits who were delivered from Limbo by our Saviour. 96. The stain contracted during Dante's journey through the Inferno. 98. The angel who guards the gate of Purgatory. (See ix. 103.)

While on his face my anxious eyes were cast.
He then began: "My son, thy steps by mine
Directing, turn thee back; for from this side
To its low boundaries doth the plain decline."
Now 'gan the vanquished matin hour to flee; 115
And seen from far, as onward came the day,
I recognised the trembling of the sea.
We journeyed o'er the solitary plain
Like one retracing his bewildered way,
Who till he finds it seems to strive in vain.
Reaching a spot where yet the sun and dew 121
In conflict vie, and where a partial shade
Preserves the surface ever moist and new,
Both hands upon the verdant herbage there
My master now with gentle action laid;
And I of his benign intent aware,
Advanced my cheeks, with humble tears bedewed; 127
When to my face, by hell's dark shades impaired,
Its former colour wholly he renewed.
Then came we to the solitary shore,
That never witnessed his return, who dared
With venturous bark its fatal waves explore.
He, as directed, straightway girt me round :— 133
Each lowly plant (O wonderful to view!)
Soon as my master plucked it from the ground,
In the same spot again spontaneous grew.

CANTO II.

ARGUMENT.

A vessel, under the guidance of an Angel, is seen coming over the sea, with spirits to Purgatory; among whom Dante recognises his friend Casella, the musician. He stops to sing one of Dante's sonnets, when, Cato reproaching them for their delay, they hasten up the mountain.

Now that horizon had the sun attained, 1
By the high point of whose meridian clear,

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131. "That undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns."—SHAKSPEARE, Hamlet, Act iii. 1.

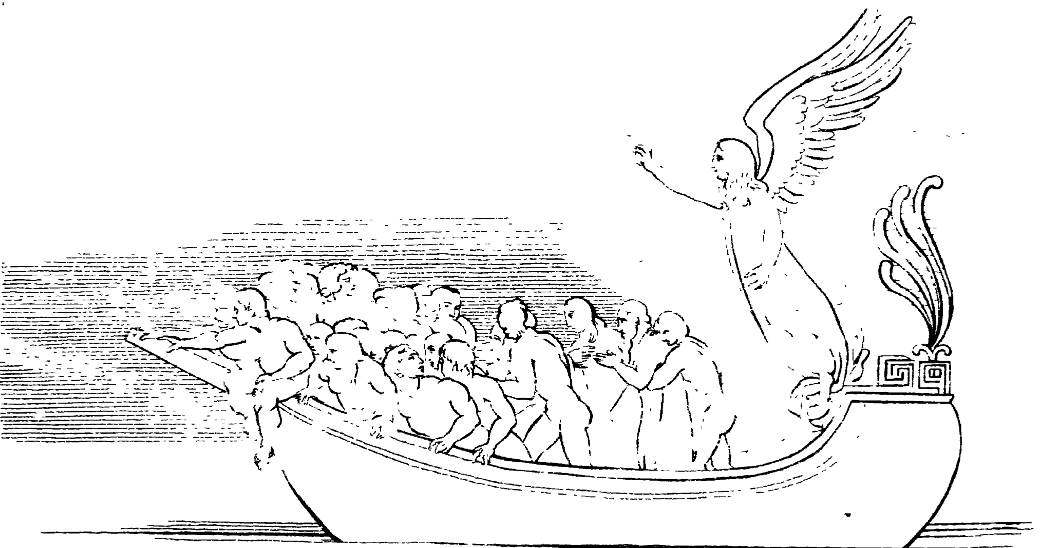
1. Various indices are used by Dante to show, according to the notions, and geography of those times, that as the sun was setting at Jerusalem, it was rising at the antipodes to that place, viz. the mountain of Purga-

Jerusalem with golden light is stained;
And circling opposite to him, the night,
Forth issuing from the Ganges, doth uprear
The scales, which fall when she has reached her height:
So that Aurora's cheek, where then I stood, 7
Began through age an orange tint to wear—
With white and vermeil colours late imbued.
By ocean's shore we still prolonged our stay,
Like men, who, thinking of a journey near,
Advance in thought, while yet their limbs delay:
When lo! like Mars, in aspect fiery red, 13
Seen through the vapours when the morn is nigh,
Far in the west above the briny bed;—
So (might I once more view it!) o'er the sea
A light approached with such rapidity—
Flies not the bird that may its equal be.
Now for a moment I had turned mine eyes 19
To Virgil, when, on looking back, more bright
It seemed again, and of an ampler size.
Then from afar appeared on either side
An object indistinct, all dazzling white;
And gradually another I descried.
My master spoke not, till the forms of light 25
First seen, were known for wings, now fully spread:
But when the Pilot was revealed to sight,
"Bend, bend thee humbly down upon thy knee;
Behold God's Angel; clasp thy hands," he said;
"Henceforth prepare such ministers to see.
See how He spurneth human means—nor oars, 31
Nor other sail except his wings assumes,
To speed his way between such distant shores.
See how He raises them, to heaven directed,
Fanning the air with those eternal plumes,
Not, like to mortal coil, by change affected."
Nearer and nearer still, as onward drew 37
The Messenger divine, he seemed more bright,

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tory. 26. The two white objects which arose, line 22, one on either side of this Angel, prove, on his nearer approach, to be his wings. "Apparser ali" is the reading adopted, instead of "aperser ali," the common reading. 27. The Angel is called "the pilot," as conducting spirits to Purgatory over the sea—his wings forming a sail to the boat. See line 32.

THE BENEDICTION



UPON THE POOP THE HEAVENLY PILOT STOOD,
WITH STAMP OF BLESSEDNESS IRRADIATE

So that mine eye could not endure the view,
But fell to earth abased :—he to the shore
Came with a little skiff, so swift and light,
The wave it touched not, as it bounded o'er.
Upon the poop the heavenly pilot stood, 43
With stamp of "Blessedness" irradiate:
More than a hundred souls within I viewed.
"What time came forth from Egypt Israel's train,"
Harmoniously they chaunted as they sate,
Nor ceased till they had closed that solemn strain.
Sign of the holy cross he made them :—they 49
Instant alighted all upon the strand;
And he as speedily retraced his way.
The crowd which there remained, a wondering gaze
Around them cast, as strangers to the land;
E'en like to one who objects new surveys.
On every side, the sun shot forth the day, 55
And had already with his arrows bright
From the mid heaven chased Capricorn away;
When the new comers, looking upward, cried:
"If ye be conversant with this fair height,
Show by what pathway we may scale its side."
And Virgil answered: "Ye suppose that we 61
Possess a full experience of the place;
But know that we are pilgrims, e'en as ye:
Not long before you, by another way
We came, so hard and difficult to trace,
That an ascent like this will seem but play."
The souls who, by my breathing, as they gazed, 67
Knew I was still alive, all pallid now
Appeared—such marvel in their minds was raised.
E'en as on news intent, the people press
Around a herald with the olive bough,
Trampling each other in their eagerness;
So round me all these happy souls repair; 73
And lingering still to look upon my face,
Forget the streams that are to make them fair.

46. "When Israel came out of Egypt," &c.—Psalm cxiv. "This psalm is sung by the spirits on their escape from Hell, and their arrival at Purgatory. 73. A similar picture is given in the Inferno, xxviii. 54, of the anxiety of the spirits to see Dante, "in wonderment forgetting all

Before them one advanced, whom I beheld
So bent on clasping me in his embrace,
That me to like endeavour he impelled.
O shadows, save in outward aspect, vain!
Three times around his form my hands I threw;
As oft returned they to my breast again.
Wonder, I deem, was painted on my face;
For with a smile the shadow backward drew;
And I full eagerly pursued its trace.
With sweet-toned voice he bade me to forbear;
Then knew I who he was, and prayed that he
Would stay, to hold some converse with me there.
"Dear as thou wert to me alive—so dear
Art thou," he answered me, "from bondage free;
Wherefore I pause—but thou, why art thou here?"
"To earth below intending to return,
This journey, dear Casella, do I make;
But why delayed thy coming, let me learn."
"No hardship do I suffer," he replied,
"If he, who taketh whom he lists to take,
Hath oft this passage to my prayer denied;
For of his will is righteous Will the guide:
All who these three months have desired to go
Hath he been carrying o'er the briny tide:
Whence I (my face directed to the strand
Where Tiber's waters into ocean flow)
Was kindly added to his former band,
And thither now his wings doth he direct;
For all the souls, not doomed to join the throng
By Acheron's shore, at Tiber's mouth collect."
Then I: "If here no ordinance annul
Memory or practice of that amorous song,

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their woes." 80. Imitated from Virgil, "Ter conatus ibi," &c. Æn. ii. 790. 86. Casella was an excellent musician, and an intimate friend of Dante, who took great delight in his songs. 90. Dante expresses his surprise that Casella, who had been dead some years, was only now arriving at Purgatory. Casella answers that the will of the Angel who had denied him an earlier passage depended on the will of God, and therefore must not be inquired into. 98. Casella, dying contumacious, was unable to obtain a passport to Purgatory. But during the great Jubilee held by Pope Boniface, in 1300, (*i. e.* three months before,) he availed himself of the prayers offered up for all souls not irrevocably doomed to Hell. 100. *i. e.* To Rome.

Which erst was wont my every care to lull—
Be pleased therewith to soothe my soul awhile, 109
Which, journeying hither with its earthly frame,
Is so encumbered and oppressed by toil."
"Love that within me speaks," in accent clear
Forth from his lips anon so sweetly came,
That still its sweetness vibrates on mine ear.
Such full contentment that illustrious sage 115
And those who stood around him testified,
Naught else, it seemed, their senses could engage.
We all were fixed in rapture on his song,
Listening attent,—when lo, the old man cried:
"How now ye lingering souls? Why here so long?
Haste,—to the mountain swiftly take the road; 121
And let your eyelids from those scales be freed
Which rob you of the presence of your God."
As when, collecting either tare or blade,
The doves, united quietly to feed,
(Awhile their customed haughtiness allayed)
If aught appear that causes them alarm, 127
All on a sudden quit the loved repast,
Assailed by greater care and fear of harm;—
So I beheld the band who joined us last,
Forsake the song, and speed them to the height,
Like one not knowing whither bound:—so fast
We hasted, eager to pursue our flight. 133

CANTO III.

ARGUMENT.

The Poets inquire the way up the mount from a troop of spirits they see advancing. One of these—Manfred, King of Naples—makes himself known to Dante, and relates the particulars of his death.

Soon as these souls dispersing through the plain, 1
In sudden flight had to the mount repaired,

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112. "Amor che nella mente mi ragiona." This is the first line of one of Dante's own sonnets, quoted in his Convito, Trat. iii. 12, where he explains this love to be the love of Wisdom. Casella thus not only complies with Dante's request, but courteously selects one of his own songs, as alluded to by Milton, Sonnet xiii. 12.

1. *i.e.* The level ground at the foot of the mountain.

Where Justice racks them with deserved pain,
I drew me closer to my faithful guide;
For how without his succour had I fared?
Who else had drawn me up the mountain side?
Inward remorse appeared his soul to wring: 7
O noble conscience, upright and refined,
How slight a fault inflicts a bitter sting!
Soon as his feet that eager haste forsook,
Which robs each act of dignity,—my mind,
On one sole object late intent—now took
A wider range, by ardent fancy led; 13
And on that mount I fixed my stedfast gaze,
Which soars to heaven with most exalted head.
The sun which, flaming red, behind us shone,
Was broken by my figure—since its rays
On me, as on a resting place, were thrown.
Seeing a shadow from my form alone 19
Cast on the ground, I turned me in dismay,
Supposing Virgil, my loved escort gone.
Anon the bard drew close unto my side,
Exclaiming: "Why these idle fears betray,
As though deserted by thy faithful guide?
'Tis evening now, where in the tomb is laid 25
The frame in which I cast a shade of yore,
To Naples from Brundusium conveyed.
If now in front of me no shade appear,
Bethink thee of the heavens; nor marvel more
Than at the rays which pass from sphere to sphere.
True, Heavenly Wisdom hath our frames disposed 31
To suffer torments, or of heat or cold;
Though how She acts is not to us disclosed.
Insensate he, who thinks with mortal ken
To pierce Infinitude, which doth enfold

8. Cato had reproved the spirits at the conclusion of the last canto for their delay in ascending the mountain. This reproach the tender conscience of Virgil takes to himself, remembering how frequently he had lectured Dante for wasting time. 12. *i. e.* In listening to the song of Casella. 15. The mountain of Purgatory. 19. Dante, not considering Virgil was a spirit, expected to see his shadow on the ground as well as his own, and on perceiving only one, imagines himself abandoned.

Three Persons in one substance.—Seek not then,
O mortal race, for reasons,—but believe, 37
And be contented; for had all been seen,
No need there was for Mary to conceive.
Men have ye known who thus desired in vain;
And whose desires that might at rest have been
Now constitute a source of endless pain;
Plato, the Stagirite, and many more 43
I here allude to:" then his head he bent,—
Was silent, and a troubled aspect wore.
Meanwhile the mountain's foot had we attained;
And so precipitous was that ascent,
Vainly had mortal limbs their sinews strained.
The most uncouth and most deserted way 49
'Twixt Lerice and Turbià, is a stair,
Compared to this, full easy to essay.
Checking his steps—"Now, who," my master said,
"Can tell me where this mountain slopes—that there
He may ascend who hath not wings to aid?"
And while his looks were cast upon the ground— 55
Considering the meaning of the road,—
And I was gazing on the height around;
Sudden appeared upon the left, a race
Of spirits drawing near, who scarcely showed
Their feet were moving, so composed their pace.
"O master!" I exclaimed, "lift up thine eyes;— 61
Behold some spirits who counsel will bestow,
If thou thyself no counsel canst devise."
He looked at me, and calmly then replied:
"Go we to meet them, since their steps are slow;
And thou, sweet son, do thou in hope abide."

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38. *i. e.* Had the ways of God been known to our first Parents, and why the apple was forbidden, they would not have listened to the temptations of Satan, and superinduced the necessity of our Saviour's incarnation. 40. *i. e.* Had the speculative philosophers been humble-minded, instead of endeavouring to pierce the counsels of God, they would have been admitted into Paradise, whereas they are now condemned to suffer in Limbo the torment of unsatisfied curiosity. Of this number was Virgil himself. (Inf. iv. 42.) Hence his perturbation, and the abrupt conclusion of his speech. 50. Places in the mountainous country of Genoa. 56. Translated on the authority of Biagoli. 60. Their tardiness designates their negligence in performing virtuous actions when on earth.

A thousand paces forward had we gone— 67
Still was that company as far away
As a good thrower might propel a stone.–
When back upon the rocks of that steep pile
All drew, and firmly stood in close array,
Like one in doubt, who stops to gaze awhile.
"Ye spirits elect, who well have run your race! 73
Oh, by that peace which, if I deem aright,
Ye all expect," said Virgil, "tell the place
Where slopes the mountain, that our feet may climb,
If it be possible, its lofty height;
For who knows most, grieves most for wasted time."
And e'en as sheep forth issue from the fold, 79
By one, by two, by three—while all the rest
Stand timid, and to earth their noses hold;
And what the leader doth, the others do,—
If chance she stop, behind her closely prest—
Simple and still—not knowing why: e'en so
I saw the leaders of this favoured race 85
Now move, now pause, as their advance they made,—
Modest in look, and dignified in pace.
When intercepted on my right they found
The solar rays, so that a lengthening shade,
Far as the cavern, darkened all the ground,
They paused—and somewhat back their steps withdrew;
And all the others who behind them came, 92
Not knowing why, fell back some paces too.
"Although ye ask not, frankly will I own,
He whom ye see still wears his human frame;
Hence on the earth a broken ray is thrown.
Be not amazed; in vain would he essay 97
To climb the summit of this mountain wall,
If heavenly Virtue guided not his way."
Thus spoke the master.—"Turn and enter first,"
Exclaimed that gentle band of spirits—all

72. They are astonished to see the two travellers coming to them in an opposite direction. 79. "If one sheep should throw himself down a precipice of a thousand feet, all the rest would follow; and if one, for any cause, in passing a road should leap, all the rest would leap, though they saw nothing to leap over." Dante, Convito. 100. *i. e.* Enter the cave or grotto, mentioned before, line 90.

Making a signal with the hand reversed:
And one of them began: "Whoe'er thou be, 103
Turn hither, as thou journeyest, and declare
If upon earth, my face was known to thee."
To him I turned, and stedfast viewed his face:
Fair was he, handsome, and of noble air,
But of a scar his eyebrow showed the trace.
When with humility I had confest 109
That I had never seen his face before,
He pointed to a wound above his breast,
And smiling added—"Manfred is my name,
Grandson of Empress Constance;—when once more
Thou shalt return, this favour let me claim:—
Go to my beauteous child, whose offspring are 115
The pride of Arragon and Sicily;
And, spite of evil tongues, the truth declare.—
Transpierced in battle by two mortal blows,
I raised my soul in prayer to Him on high,
Who peace and pardon willingly bestows.
My sins were horrible, I must aver; 121
But such wide arms hath Mercy infinite,
She welcomes every soul that turns to her.
Cosenza's Shepherd, by Pope Clement sent
To hunt me down—had he but read aright
This text, in Scripture for his guidance lent,
My bones had still their former place possessed 127
Near Benevento, at the bridge's head,
And, guarded by the mound, had been at rest:

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107. Manfred, natural son of Frederick II.—"The greatest man," says Sismondi, "who has filled the throne of the Two Sicilies." On the invasion of Italy by Charles of Anjou, he was defeated and killed at Beneventum, in 1265. 115. Manfred enjoins Dante to seek his daughter Constance, wife of Peter III. of Arragon, for the purpose of satisfying her as to his doom, and dissipating the painful doubts which the Pope and the Priesthood had excited. 121. The Priests had defamed him; but he is highly praised by our poet in his *De Vulg. Eloq.* i. 12. 124. "Because Manfred died under sentence of excommunication, King Charles would not have his body brought into consecrated ground, and he was buried at the foot of the bridge of Beneventum. A stone was thrown by every soldier in the army upon the trench, so that a great mound was raised. But it is reported that by command of the Pope Clement IV., the Bishop of Cosenza took his body thence and carried it out of the kingdom, because it was church land; and he was buried by the side of the river Verde."—*Villani*, lib. vii. cap. 9.

The wind now sweeps them, when the rain hath drenched,
  Beyond the kingdom, far as Verde spread,
  Whither he bore them, with the torches quenched.
But their fell curses cannot fix our doom, 133
  Nor stay the eternal Love from His intent,
  While Hope remaining bears her verdant bloom.
'Tis true, that he who doth the Church offend,
  And contumacious dies, though he repent
  At last,—for all the time that he did spend
In that presumption—must, without this ridge 139
  Rove thirty times as long; unless such date
  The availing prayers of holy men abridge.
See then the means how thou my soul may'st cheer,
  Telling my good Costanza the estate
  In which thou see'st me, and this ban; for here
Have earthly prayers a never failing weight." 145

CANTO IV.

ARGUMENT.

The Poets ascend the mountain through a narrow opening. They find several indolent spirits reposing in the shade, behind a large stone. With one of these, Belacqua, Dante holds a conversation.

WHEN through excess of joy, or misery, 1
  Which any of our faculties enchains,
  The soul concentrates all its energy,
It seems no other impulse to obey;—
  And this dispels that error, which maintains

131. *i. e.* Beyond the kingdom of Naples, and buried as an excommunicated person. 133. "Not contented with persecuting him during his life, with defaming his character, and precipitating him from his throne, they took upon themselves to pronounce the sentence of his eternal damnation. His body was torn from the grave and exposed on the banks of a river, as that of a rebellious and excommunicated son of the church. Yet the Divinity, whose mercy is not as the mercy of man, hath accepted him, pardoned him, and given him promise of an eternity of bliss:—neither the malediction of the priests, nor the imposing forms of excommunication possessing power to deprive sinners of the benefits of infinite love."—*Sismondi's Italian Literature.* 144. The "ban" is the prohibition to enter Purgatory till after the period appointed to the excommunicated.

5. Plato and others maintained that man had three souls:—the vegetative the sensitive, and the rational. Were this true, Dante argues, the

That several souls light up our mortal clay.
And thus, when aught perchance is heard or seen, 7
Which strongly to itself attracts the soul,
Time flies, though man perceive not it hath been:
For know, that hearing is a faculty
Distinct from that which animates the whole;
And this appears enchained, while that is free.
The truth of this I fully ascertained 13
When, listening to that shade, I looked around;
For now full fifty steps the sun had gained,
By me the while unnoticed, when we came
Where—"Here, the way ye ask for may be found,"
With voice unanimous the souls exclaim.
Wider the gap which oft the village clown 19
Closes with so much thorn as he may bear
Once on his fork, what time the grape grows brown,
Than was the pathway, by whose course my guide,
And I behind him, scaled the rugged stair,
Soon as that troop had parted from our side.
Down may one go to Noli, or the high 25
Bismantua climb—San Leo's steep ascend,
With feet alone; but here one needs must fly—
With buoyant wing I mean, and with the plume
Of strong desire, as I his steps attend
Who gave me hope, and lit me through the gloom.
Up through the broken rock we then proceeded, 31
Which hemmed us closely in on either flank,
So that our hands as well as feet we needed:
And when, at last, was opened to our view
The plain that crowned the summit of the bank,—
"Master," I said, "what path shall we pursue?"
Then he: "Let not a step in thy career 37
Decline; but up the mountain follow me,
Until some wise conductor shall appear."
The summit far above man's ken was placed:
And steeper seemed its haughty sides to be
Than through mid quadrant line to centre traced.

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employment of one faculty would not prevent the exercise of another, as was the case with him on the present occasion. So intent had he been in listening to Manfred, that he perceived not how the day had advanced.
42. *i. e.* The ascent was nearly perpendicular, and greater than an angle of 45 degrees.

Wearied I was, and of all strength bereft, 43
When, "Turn and look, loved father!" I began;
"If thou desert me I alone am left."
"Drag thee to yonder cornice," he replied,
"My son;" and pointed to a ledge that ran
A little higher round the mountain side.
His words so spurred me on, I forced my way, 49
Struggling on hands and knees his pace to keep,
Until the circling ledge beneath me lay.
There sate we both, upon the bank reclined,
Facing the east, where first we climbed the steep;—
And oft a retrospect delights the mind.
To the low shores I first direct mine eyes, 55
Then lift them to the sun, in wondering gaze,
To see how from the left his beams arise,
The bard observed how on the car of light
My eyes were wholly fixed, in dull amaze,
Where 'twixt the north and us it struck our sight:
"If Jove's twin progeny," to me he said, 61
"In company with that bright mirror were,
Whose guiding radiance high and low is shed,
The ruddy Zodiac then would'st thou behold
Still wheeling closer round to either Bear,
Unless it deviate from its pathway old.
How this may be, if thou desire to know, 67
Imagine Sion with this mountain high
So placed together on our earth below,
That one horizon only have the two,
But different hemispheres; and thus thine eye
Along that path which Phaëton ill knew,
Will see the sun reach one in his career, 73
And then the other, on the opposing side;
If that thine intellectual sight be clear."
"Never, in truth, O Master, did I see

57. In all countries this side the Tropic of Cancer, he who faces the east sees the sun on his right. See Lucan. Phars. iii. 247. 61. *i.e* If the sun, instead of being in Aries, had been in Gemini—both the sun and the zodiac would have been seen to wheel nearer the Bears. 66. The Ecliptic. 68. *i. e.* Consider that Mount Sion and this mountain of Purgatory are antipodal to each other, having the same horizon, but different hemispheres; so that the sun, journeying along the "path" of the Ecliptic, must needs rise alternately on opposite sides of the respective mountains.

With such clear intellect as now," I cried,
" (That which hath hitherto been dark to me)
How the mid circle that doth earth enfold,— 79
In terms of science the Equator hight—
And situate 'twixt the extremes of heat and cold,
Runs northward, for the reason given;—though, viewed
By those who dwell in Palestine, its site
Lies towards a region more with heat endued.
But I would gladly learn,—deign thou to teach— 85
What height we have to ascend; for higher far
The hill uprises than mine eyes can reach."
" Such is this mountain's nature," he replied,
" That difficult the first steps always are,
But easier, as man scales its lofty side.
Hence, when so pleasant it to thee shall seem, 91
That the ascending shall as easy be,
As in a boat the gliding down a stream,—
Then wilt thou have attained thy journey's end;
Then rest from thy fatigue awaiteth thee:
I say no more;—on this for truth depend."
When he had brought his converse to a close, 97
A voice was heard: " Before that road be passed,
Necessity may force thee to repose."
Each, as attracted by the sound we turned,
Saw on the left a stone of measure vast,
Which neither I nor Virgil had discerned.
Thither we drew; and there some spirits stood 103
Who in the shade behind the rocky mound
Loitered, like men who stand in idle mood:
And one, who seemed by weariness opprest,
Was sitting with his arms his knees around,
Between them bending down his head to rest.
" Dear lord," I said, " behold a spirit there, 109
Who doth comport himself more lazily
Than if e'en Idleness his sister were."
To us he turned—and gazed with look intent,
Moving his features upward o'er the thigh,

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82. In the northern hemisphere it appears to run south; in the southern emisphere, north. 93. *i. e.* When the habit of virtue shall have ecome a second nature. 104. " As the shadow of a great rock in a reary land." Isaiah xxxii. 2. 106. Belacqua—an excellent usician, but of very indolent habits. See line 123.

As thus he said—"Now, brave one, mount the ascent."
Then was he known to me; nor did the pain, 115
That from my labouring chest o'ercame me still,
Make me from nearer intercourse refrain.
As I approached, he scarcely moved his head,
Saying:—" Hast learnt why over yonder hill
His car upon the left hath Phœbus led?"
His lazy gestures, and his converse brief 121
Brought my lips somewhat to a smile;—then I:
" Belacqua, now for thee hath ceased my grief;
But wherefore thou art sitting there, explain;—
Dost thou await a guide thus patiently?
Or merely thy old mood indulge again?"
" O brother, what avails the steep to climb?" 127
He said; " for know, God's Angel at the gate
Would not admit me ere the appointed time.
Whirled must I be without these boundaries
Long as I dwelt on earth, (and this my fate,
Since I till death delayed repentant sighs,)
Unless by prayer a speedier aid be given,— 133
Prayer from a heart which Grace hath visited:
What other prayer avails—unheard in Heaven?"
The poet now was climbing up the height
Before me:—" Haste thy steps:—the sun," he said,
" Strikes the meridian; and already Night
Over Marocco's coast her foot hath spread." 139

CANTO V.

ARGUMENT.

Dante is reproved by Virgil for attending to the whispers of the spirits who wonder at his casting a shadow.—A troop arrive, singing the Miserere. Although they had delayed repentance till overtaken by a violent death, they were graciously allowed to make their peace with God. Buonconte da Montefeltro. Pia.

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114. Belacqua had overheard Dante pointing him out to Virgil by his lazy attitude, and retorts ironically. This taunting strain he continues, on Dante's approaching nearer. 119. In allusion to the ignorance Dante had betrayed in his inquiry (line 57) as to the unusual appearance of the sun. 123. *i.e.* My grief for your death vanishes, on finding you here. See canto vii. 54. 130. See canto iii. 140. 139. Marocco, or Mauritania, is mentioned as bordering on the hemisphere of Jerusalem. Being midnight there, it was mid-day in Purgatory.

FOLLOWING the footsteps of my faithful guide 1
Those souls I now had left, when in the rear
One, with his finger pointing to me, cried:
"See how his form obstructs the solar light,
So that a shade doth to his left appear,
As though he were indeed a living wight."
On hearing them, I straightway turned me round, 7
And saw their looks first fixed on me alone,
Then on the shadow cast upon the ground.
"Why thus absorbed," said Virgil, "is thy thought,
That thou so tardily proceedest on?
What idle whispers here concern thee aught
Follow thou me, nor heed what others say:— 13
Be like a tower that never stoops its head,
Bellow the tempests fiercely as they may.
He in whose breast springs thought to thought succeeding,
Of his intent is ever frustrated—
The force of one the other's force impeding."
Save that "I come," what answer could I give— 19
My features slightly dyed with hue of shame,
Which makes man worthy pardon to receive?
Meanwhile upon our flank obliquely hung
A band of souls that o'er the mountain came,
And verse by verse the Miserere sung.
When they observed that, as I passed along, 25
My body was impervious to the ray,
Into a long hoarse "Oh!" they changed their song.
And two, as if deputed by that band,
Ran forward, and addressed us on our way:
"Give us your real state to understand."
My master answered them: "Ye may return, 31
And this report to those who sent you bear;
Alive is he whose form ye here discern:
If, as I judge, they paused his shade to view,
This answer may suffice.—Let them prepare
To honour one who may good service do."
Never beheld I at the fall of night 37
So swiftly fly o'er heaven a meteor's flame,

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16. See Inferno, ii. 37. 24. *i.e.* The 51st Psalm, "Have mercy upon me, O God," &c. 36. *i. e.* By bearing news of them to their relations, and requesting them to offer up prayers, that the period of their sufferings might be shortened.

Or August's clouds, when Sol withdraws his light,
But that in shorter time around they wheeled,
And joined the rest:—then all to meet us came,
Like troops with slackened rein that scour the field.
"Close are we pressed, and by a numerous throng," 43
The poet said;—"they come to ask thy aid:
List to their prayers, but listening move along."
"O soul, who in the hope of being blest
Hast with thy mortal limbs this path essayed,"
Shouting they came,—"awhile thy footsteps rest:
Look on our features; and if any trace 49
Thou recognise, to earth the tidings bear:
Ah! why this haste? why not relax thy pace?
By violence we all our death incurred;
And sinners to our latest hour we were,
When light from Heaven informed us how we erred;
So that, repenting and forgiving, we 55
Did make our peace with God before we died,
Who thrills us with desire his face to see."
"No well remembered features do I view;—
But, O ye blessed spirits," I replied,
"If aught may give you pleasure I can do—
Tell me, and by the peace I seek on high, 61
From world to world by such an escort led,—
Tell me—and with your wish will I comply."
"In thy kind promises confide we all,
Although thou swearest not," one spirit said;
"Unless thy purpose want of power enthrall.
Whence I, who speak to thee before the rest, 67
Beseech thee, if the country e'er thou see
'Twixt Naples and Romagna, my request
In Fano to make known with courteous prayer,
That orisons be offered up for me,
To cleanse me of the weighty sins I bear.
There was I born;—but near the city built 73
By great Antenor I the wound received
By which my life's blood was untimely spilt—
There where I thought to find a safe retreat.

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67. Jacopo del Cassero—a citizen of Fano, who having scandalized Azzone III., "him of Este," line 77, was assassinated by his orders at Oriaco, near Padua, where he thought himself safe from his enemy.
73. The city of Padua

THE DELIVERANCE OF BUONCONTI



Through him of Este I was of life bereaved,
Though not deserving enmity so great.
Towards Mira had I fled, when sore beset 79
At Oriaco by the murderous foe,
With those that breathe had I been numbered yet ·
But running to the marsh, in reeds and mud
I fell entangled, and beheld the flow
That from my veins imbued the earth with blood."
Then spake another: "That desire of thine, 85
Which prompts thee to ascend the mountain's crest,
Mayest thou accomplish, as thou favour mine!
I was of Montefeltro; and my name
Buonconte: since Giovanna and the rest
Care not for me, I walk opprest with shame."
Then I to him: "What accident or force 91
From Campaldino's plain thy body drew,
That no one ever chanced to find thy corse?"
He answered: "At the foot of Casentine
The Archiano doth its way pursue
From o'er the hermit's seat in Apennine:
And thither, where it ceases to retain 97
Its title, with my neck transpierced I came,
Flying on foot—my life-blood on the plain.
Arriving there, all sense of vision gone,
My speech I finished with the Virgin's name—
There fell; and there remained my flesh alone.
The truth I tell do thou on earth repeat:— 103
God's Angel claimed me; but Hell's demon dread
Cried: 'Thou from Heaven! O why my aim defeat?
Thou robbest me of his eternal soul
For that one tear of penitence he shed;
But what remains is under my control.'

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88. Buonconte was son of Guido, Count Montefeltro. See Inf. xxvii. 67. Fighting against the Guelfs he was killed, and his body never found. Hence the poet feigns the description that follows. Giovanna, his wife, he says, cares not to offer up prayers for him, to expedite his entrance into Purgatory, and he therefore implores the assistance of Dante. 92. A plain in the Casentine of Poppi, where the battle took place. 95. A river which runs into the Arno. 104. See a similar dispute in the Inferno (xxvii. 112) between St. Francis and the Devil, as to their right over the soul of Guido, the father of this Buonconte.—Guido is carried off to Hell, though absolved by the Pope,—Buonconte to Paradise, though excommunicated by the Pope.

Thou knowest how rise, collected in the air, 109
The humid mists, which when they mount on high,
Are turned to water in those regions rare:
These did the evil one (his will combined
With intellect, for such strong faculty
His nature gave) stir up, disturbed by wind.
When day had closed, from Pratomagno thence 115
To Apennine, with vapours dark as pitch
He filled the vale, and made the heaven so dense,
That the o'erburdened air was turned to rain.
Copious it fell, and into many a ditch
Ran what the sated earth could not contain.
And to great streams as lesser bend their course, 121
So to the royal river onward dashed
The swelling flood, that nought could check its force.
Cast at his mouth the impetuous Archian found
My frozen corpse, and into Arno washed;
And from my breast that hallowed cross unbound,
Which, racked with pain, I of my arms had made. 127
Whirled was I then its sides and depths among,
Till o'er me were its furtive treasures laid."
"Ah! when, to earth restored, thou shalt repose
From all the labours of thy journey long,"
Said a third voice, which gently then arose,
"Me, who am Pia, to remembrance bring; 133
Siena bore me; and Maremma slew;—
He who, on marrying me, a golden ring
Placed on my finger, knoweth this is true."

CANTO VI.

ARGUMENT.

Dante is solicited by numerous shades to obtain for them the prayers of their friends when he returns to this world. Sordello the Mantuan is

112. See Inferno xxxi. 55. 126. *i. e.* The cross which he had made, when dying, by folding his arms across his breast. 133. Pia —a beautiful lady of noble family at Siena—was the wife of Nello della Pietra, who, excited to jealousy by false reports, carried her into the pestilential district of the Maremma, where she died in a few months. "Dante had in this incident all the materials of ample and very poetical narrative; but he bestows on it only four verses. Yet these few words draw tears from those who know her fate. Her first desire to be called to the remembrance of her friends on earth is very affecting." Ugo Foscolo. Edin. Review, No. 58. Art. *Dante.*

sitting alone, proud and disdainful. On finding that Virgil is his countryman, he springs forward to embrace him. Dante breaks forth into an apostrophe against the unnatural quarrels of the Italians.

WHEN players from the game of dice depart, 1
He who hath lost remains of sorrowing mind,
His throws repeating, so to learn the art:—
The crowd pursues the winner of the game;
One goes before, one twitches him behind,
One at his side doth old acquaintance claim:—
He stays not; but to some an ear he lends, 7
To some gives money:—these straight yield their place;
And from the crowd he thus himself defends.
Such was my state amid that numerous crew,
As oft on either side I turned my face;
While they with my fair promises withdrew.
He of Arezzo, who the mortal blow 13
Received from Ghino's arm, there met my view:
He also, who, while following his foe,
Was whelmed in Arno:—there Novello prayed
With hands uplifted;—he of Pisa, too,
Who good Marzuco's fortitude displayed.
I saw Count Orso; and that shade who fell 19
A sacrifice to envy and to spite,
And not through crime committed, as they tell;—
Pier de la Brosse I mean; and let beware
The dame of Brabant while she sees the light,
Lest to a flock more sinful she repair.
When I from all these spirits had been freed, 25
Who prayed they might obtain the prayers of man,
Their progress to a blessed state to speed;—

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13. Benincasa of Arezzo, acting as Judge in Siena, put to death the brother of Ghino di Tacco, a noted robber, and was in revenge assassinated. 15. Cione de' Tarlati,—an Aretine who was carried by his horse into the Arno and drowned. 16. Frederico Novello, son of Count Guido da Battifolli, slain in battle. 18. Farinata di Scornigiani of Pisa—on occasion of whose murder, his father, Marzuco, exhorted his kinsmen to reconciliation as he followed the funeral. 19. Count Orso da Cerbaia,—said to have been slain by his uncle. 22. Peter de la Brosse, secretary and counsellor to Philip the Fair of France.—Of his influence the courtiers were so jealous, that they prejudiced the Queen, Mary of Brabant, against him, and prevailed on her to accuse him of an attempt upon her chastity, for which supposed crime he was put to death. She is warned to expiate her guilt, lest she be sent to Hell instead of Purgatory.

"O thou my light! thy text, it seems, hath given
Denial to the doctrine," I began,
"That prayers can alter the decrees of heaven:
Yet such the faith these spirits entertain. 31
Will all their hopes then prove of no avail?
Or is thy writing not to me made plain?"
"Plain is my writing," straightway he rejoined,
"Nor will their cherished expectations fail,
If thou consider with a thoughtful mind:
For Judgment stoops not from His lofty seat 37
Though Love's warm flame, in one short moment, may
That ransom work these should themselves complete.
Moreover, where I wrote that maxim—there
No crime by praying could be washed away,
Since from the Almighty was disjoined their prayer.
But on my answer do not thou rely, 43
Unless confirmed by her who is the light
That shines between the truth and mental eye.
Know'st thou my meaning? Beatrice I mean;—
She, blest and joyous, on the verdant height
Of this fair mountain shall by thee be seen."
Then I: "Let us proceed with greater haste; 49
I am not weary as before; and lo!
Already doth the mount a shadow cast."
"We shall advance before the evening close,
Far as we can," he answered me; "but know,
The mountain's form is not what you suppose.
Ere to the summit we have won our way, 55
Shall reappear that glorious orb of light,
Which now behind the hill conceals his ray.
But see a spirit sitting there alone,
And lonely, who to us directs his sight;
The shortest passage will by him be shown."
To him advanced we.—What disdain and pride, 61
O Lombard soul; thy countenance bespoke!

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28. Dante addresses Virgil. The text is, "Desine fata Deûm flecti sperare precando," (Æn. vi. 376), which seems to contravene the hope of the spirits that they may obtain pardon by the intercession of their friends. 37. *i. e.* The decrees of God are not inconsistent, though the prayers of good men are through "love's warm flame," effectually offered up for the spirits in Purgatory. 40. In Hell, where no prayers can avail. 47. The epithets "*ridente e felice*," apply to Beatrice rather than to the mountain. 62. Sordello was a celebrated

Thine eyes, how moved they, slow and dignified!
To us the spirit not a word addressed,
Letting us pass—and deigning but a look,—
Like to a lion when he lies at rest.
Yet Virgil towards him still advancing on, 67
Prayed him to show how up the mountain side
We best might speed:—reply vouchsafed he none;
But of our mode of life, and country straight
Inquired; and when began my gentle guide,
"Mantua,"—the spirit, so abstracted late
Sprang towards him from his seat in eager haste, 73
Crying, "O Mantuan, from thy land am I,
Sordello;"—one the other then embraced.
Ah, servile Italy! abode of woe!
Bark without pilot in a stormy sky!
Queen once of fair domains—now fallen low!—
With such warm zeal that noble spirit came, 79
A welcome to his countryman to pay,
But for the sweet sound of his country's name;—
While now thy living ones are constant foes,
And each one gnaws the other—even they
Whom the same moat, the self-same walls enclose.
Search, wretched one! thy sea-girt shores around; 85
Then inward turn to thine own breast; and see
If any part in joyous peace be found.

Troubadour, in the service of Raymond Berenger. "By the voice of St. Louis himself he had been recognised at a tournay, as the bravest of knights. His reputation is owing very materially to the admiration here expressed for him by Dante, who is so struck with the noble haughtiness of his aspect, that he compares him to a lion in a state of majestic repose." Sismondi. Ital. Lit. Roscoe's Trans. 72. Virgil, in answer to Sordello's inquiry as to his country, was beginning, in the words of his epitaph: "Mantua me genuit," &c. when hearing but the name of his country, Sordello instantly springs up and embraces him. 74. "Centuries and the mutations of centuries lapse into nothing before that strong feeling of homogeneity which bursts forth in the O Mantovano!" Arthur Henry Hallam. Remains in Verse and Prose. 76. "From the recollection of the joyful interview of these two compatriots, the poet, turning his thoughts to the divisions by which his country was torn, is justly aroused by feelings of the utmost indignation, which give rise to the vehement apostrophe that occupies the remainder of the canto." Biagioli. 82. "If identity of country rendered Sordello and Virgil so affectionate, who lived in far distant times, much more," Dante infers, "should those love each other who are contemporaries, and living within the same wall." Lombardi.

What boots it that Justinian's skill replaced
The bit, if empty now the saddle be?—
Without it thou had'st been far less disgraced.
Ah ye! who should to things divine be given, 91
And let Augustus in his saddle sit,
(If ye had listened to the voice of Heaven)—
Look how the beast, refusing all command,
For want of spurs obeyeth not the bit,
Since to the bridle ye have put your hand.
O Austrian Albert! who desertest her, 97
(Ungovernable now and savage grown)
When most she needed pressing with the spur—
May on thy race Heaven's righteous judgment fall;
And be it signally and plainly shown,
With terror thy successor to appal,
Since by thy lust yon distant lands to gain, 103
Thou and thy sire have suffered wild to run
What was the garden of thy fair domain.
Come, see the Capulets and Montagues—
Monaldi—Filippeschi, reckless one!
Whom still a foeman's rivalry pursues.
Come, cruel one! behold, what ills endure 109
Thy nobles, and avenge their injuries;
See too if Santafiore be secure.
Come, and behold thy Rome, how she doth mourn;
A lonely widow, day and night she cries,
"When will my Cæsar to my arms return?"

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88. *i. e.* His exertions are of no avail, if Italy is to be no longer under the controul of his successor. 91. The "gente" are rightly applied by Lombardi to the priests, who had subverted the imperial government. Compare canto xvi. 100. 94. In his Convito, Dante describes the Emperor under the image of one who rides or curbs the human will; and this will he likens to a horse let loose in wretched Italy (the beast of the text), where no kind of government exists. Trat. iv. 9. 97. Albert, Emperor of Austria, who succeeded his father, Rodolph, in 1298, never entered Italy. 100. This imprecation, in the form of a prophecy, points to his murder in 1308 by his nephew. 102. His successor was Henry VII. of Luxembourg, whom Dante vainly expected to deliver his country. See Par. xxx. 136. 105. Italy,—which Albert and his father neglected for the sake of their German possessions. 108. *i. e.* The enmity between the Guelfs and Ghibelines ruined these great families. 111. A place near Siena—ironically mentioned as an instance of the desolations committed by robbers, through the inertness of the government

Come, and behold thy people, how they love!
  And if no pity our distress inspire,
  Let blushes for thyself thy pity move.
O Thou whose blood for us redemption earned,
  Say (if for me 'tis lawful to inquire)
  Are Thy just eyes, indignant elsewhere turned?
Or is it with a view to some good end
  Determined in thy counsel's deep abyss,
  Beyond what we have power to comprehend—
That full of tyrants is Italia's land;
  And a Marcellus straight accounted is
  Each peasant vile that wields a factious brand?
My Florence! well contented may'st thou be
  With this digression—thee it toucheth not;
  Thanks to the people who advise for thee!
Many have justice in their hearts; but long
  Delay, through fear, the meditated shot:—
  Thy people have it on the very tongue.
Many refuse the burdens of the state;—
  Thy people answer with officious haste
  Ere they are asked: "I bow me to the weight."
Then be thou joyful, for good cause hast thou;—
  Thou rich! thou peaceful! thou with wisdom graced!
  That truth I speak, the facts themselves avow.
Athens and Lacedæmon, who displayed
  Such skill in laws, and were so polished too,
  In social life but slight improvement made,
Compared to thee, who dost such schemes conceive—
  The subtle thread lasts not November through,
  Which in October thou began'st to weave.
How oft, within the time we can retrace,
  Hast thou thy customs changed and changed again,
  Thy laws, thy coin, and e'en thy very race!
If thou rememberest well, and art not blind,
  Thou'lt see thyself like one distraught with pain,
  Who on her bed of down no rest can find,
But, ever turning, seeks relief in vain.

CANTO VII.

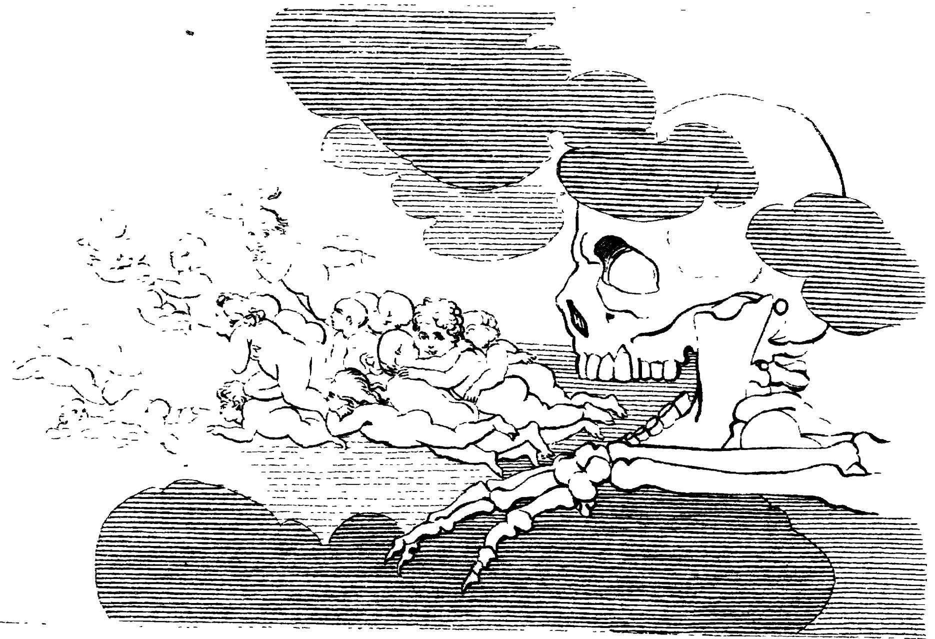
ARGUMENT.

Sordello informs the Poets that they cannot ascend by night, and leads them to a beautiful valley, where are many illustrious spirits, who have

delayed repentance to a late period. The Emperor Rodolph. Ottocar. Philip III. of France. Henry of Navarre. Peter III. of Arragon. Charles I. of Naples. Henry III. of England. William, Marquis of Montferrat.

When these kind greetings, made so courteously, 1
Had been repeated now full many a time,
Back drew Sordello, saying: "Who are ye?"
"Ere yet the souls whom God decreed to save,
(Worthy such grace) were taught this mount to climb,
A burial to my bones Octavian gave:
Virgil am I;—nor lost to me is Heaven 7
For any crime, but want of faith alone."
Such was the answer by my escort given.
As one who something suddenly descries
So strange and wondrous, he exclaims anon,
"It is—it is not:"—e'en in such surprise
Appeared the shade:—then down his eyes he hung; 13
And, turning to the bard, obeisance made,
While round his knees in reverent guise he clung.
"O thou, the glory of the Latin race,"
He said, "by whom our tongue its force displayed!
Pride of my native country!—tell what grace,
What merit brings thee hither?—if to hear 19
Thy accents I am thought deserving—say,
Com'st thou from Hell, and from what circle drear?"
"Through all the circles of that realm of gloom,"
He answered, "I have hither won my way;
Virtue divine inspires;—with Her I come.
Not what I did, but what I failed to do 25
Snatched from mine eyes that Sun's exalted light
By thee desired, which all too late I knew.
A place there is below, not vext with cries,
But shrouded ever in the vale of night,
Where grief obtains not utterance, save in sighs.
With little innocents I there abide, 31
Seized by the fangs of death in early prime,
Ere they from human sin were purified.
There I reside with those who put not on
The three great virtues, yet devoid of crime,

4. Virgil answers that he died in the reign of Augustus, before the souls chosen of God were directed to seek repentance. See Inf. iv. 53. 25. See Inf. iv. 37. 28. Limbo [illegible] Inf. iv. 25.



"WITH LITTLE INNOCENTS I THERE ABIDE
SEIZED BY THE FANGS OF DEATH IN EARLY PRIME [illegible]

Knew all the rest, and practised every one.
But, if thou canst, we pray thee to relate 37
Where first commences Purgatory's bound,
That we may speedily attain the gate."
"We have no certain limits," he replied;
"Free am I to ascend, or coast around:
Far as I may, I will become thy guide.
But lo! already day begins to wear; 43
And since the night forbids us to ascend,
Let us to some fair resting-place repair.
Yonder are shades far distant on our right;
Thither, so please thee, we our steps will bend;
And their acquaintance may afford delight."
"How so?" a spirit asked:—"will he be checked 49
By others force, who up by night would go?
Or be impeded by his own defect?"
The good Sordello with his finger traced
A line upon the ground, exclaiming: "Lo!
Not after sunset could e'en this be passed.
Nought else indeed an obstacle presents 55
To one ascending, save the gloom of night,
Which clogs the will, and all success prevents.
Yet may he take by night the downward way,
And wind at pleasure round the mountain height,
While still the horizon hides the face of day."
Then said my Master, as he looked around: 61
"Lead us, I pray thee, where, as thou hast said,
Some pleasant place of sojourn may be found."
From thence a little distance on we went;
When lo! a hollow space the mount displayed,
Such as the valleys on our earth present.
"To yonder mount will we our steps direct, 67
Where a recess within appears," he said,
"And there the dawning of the day expect."
A path oblique along the mountain lay,
Which to that smiling valley gently led,
Where, sloping down, its margin dies away.
Pure gold and silver, Indian wood serene, 73
Dyes that most gorgeous and refulgent are,
Emerald, when freshly broken it hath been,

38. They had been conversing, in the outskirts of Purgatory.

Would by the flowers that decked this fair recess
Have each in colour been surpassed as far
As by the greater is excelled the less.
Her loveliest tints had Nature lavished there, 79
Nor these alone,—but from a thousand sweets
With unknown perfume filled the fragrant air.
"Salve Regina" chaunting, met our eyne
Spirits, who rested on their flowery seats,
By those without this beauteous vale unseen.
"Indulge no wish among those souls to go," 85
(Began the shade who pointed out the place,)
"Before the setting sun hath sunk below,
So soon to leave us:—from this rising ground
Their looks and actions thou wilt better trace
Than mingling with them in the vale profound.
He who sits highest, and the semblance bears 91
Of having not fulfilled his part, and who
Moves not his lips to join the others' prayers,
Was Emperor Rodolph; who the power possessed
To heal the wounds which Italy o'erthrew,—
Those wounds too deadly to be now redressed.
The other, whose kind look his grief consoles, 97
Ruled o'er the land whence Molda's stream doth run,
Which, mixt with Albia, into ocean rolls.
His name was Ottocar:—an infant, he
Was worthier than Winceslaus his son,—
In manhood given to ease and luxury.
He of short nose, in counsel side by side 103
With him whose face is so benign and bland,
Disgraced the lilies, flying ere he died.
See how impatiently he strikes his breast:
See how the other, sighing—on his hand
Hath laid his cheek, as on a bed, to rest.
The father, and the consort's father, they, 109
Of Gallia's scourge; and this their sorrow flows,
To think how foully lives he at this day.

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94. The father of Albert. Canto vi. line 103. 97. Henry, King of Navarre—father-in-law to Philip the Fair. His "grief" is for the wickedness of their son and son-in-law. 103. Philip III. of France, father of Philip the Fair.—In an expedition against the King of Arragon, he lost his fleet and his army—thus disgracing the lilies;—and died of grief at Perpignan, in 1285. Hence his attitude of distress.

He, large of limb, in song accompanied
By him conspicuous with projecting nose,
With every virtue wore his girdle tied:
And if his offspring had survived on earth 115
And yonder youth succeeded to the throne,
Inherited had been the father's worth;
Which none can say of both his other heirs.
Now James and Frederick his dominions own;
His far more noble heritage none shares.
But rarely human excellence doth mount 121
Into the branches; such the Giver's will,
That freely His the boon we may account.
To Charles no less than Peter I allude;
And hence doth spring that fruitful source of ill,
Which Provence and Apulia's land have rued.
Its native vigour hath the plant so lost, 127
That such a husband as Constanza's lord,
Nor Beatrice, nor Margaret can boast.
There England's Henry seated may be seen,
Alone, contented with a frugal board;
And in his branches happier hath he been.
He who sits lower, but who looks above, 133
Is Marquis William, who occasion lent
To Alexandria, that fell war to move
The Canavese and Montferrat lament."

CANTO VIII.

ARGUMENT.

A hymn is sung by one of the spirits. Two Angels descend from Heaven,

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112. Peter III. of Arragon;—his companion, Charles I. king of Apulia. 116. Peter's eldest son, Alphonso, or his youngest, Peter. 119. *i. e.* His two other sons who succeeded to his dominions—James to Arragon, and Frederick to Sicily—inherited not the virtues of their father. 124. The same before mentioned, lines 112, 113. They are said to be respectively superior to their children. 128. Wife of Peter III. of Arragon, before mentioned. 129. Daughters of Raymond Berenger.—They married, one St. Louis of France—the other, his brother Charles of Anjou. 130. Henry III. of England,—more happy in his offspring than Peter III.,—alluding to Edward I. of famous memory. 134. Marquis of Montferrat.—He "sits lower," as not of royal blood, and "looks above," to denote his virtue. Being killed by his nobles for curbing their tyranny over the people, a war ensued between them and his sons.

as guardians of the valley against the serpent. Conversation with Nino di Gallura and Conrad Malespina.

It was the hour that wakes regret anew 1
In men at sea, and melts the heart to tears,
The day whereon they bade sweet friends adieu ;—
And thrills the youthful pilgrim on his way
With thoughts of love, if from afar he hears
The Vesper bell, that mourns the dying day ;—
What time no more the holy strain I caught, 7
And saw one soul uprisen among the rest,
Who with her hand outstretched a hearing sought.
She clasped, and raised both palms, with placid brow,
Fixing her eyes intently tow'rds the east,
As saying—" God ! my only care art Thou !"
" Te lucis ante," with such deep devotion 13
Forth issued from her lips in notes so soft,
My soul was ravished with intense emotion.
Meanwhile the others, sweetly and devout,
Keeping their eyes upon the wheels aloft,
Accompanied her voice the hymn throughout.
Reader ! here sharpen to the truth thy sight ; 19
Or thou may'st haply overlook the veil,
So finely woven, and of texture slight.
Silently gazing upward then I viewed
That amiable band, all meek and pale,
As though in expectation lost they stood :
I also saw two Angels from on high 25
Descending, each with flaming sword in hand,
Pointless and broken as it met mine eye.
Green, like to new-born leaves, their garments were,
Which from behind by verdant pinions fanned,
Were borne aloft, and floated in the air.
Somewhat above us, one a station gained ; 31

1. See Gray's imitation, and Lord Byron's translation of this celebrated passage. 11. The ancient Christians, praying by night, recognized in the rising sun a representation of Jesus Christ. 13. " Te lucis ante terminum," are the first words of a hymn of the church, imploring protection during the night against evil spirits. It refers here to the serpent that every night infested the valley. See line 98. 17. The heavenly spheres. 19. Lombardi supposes that the spirits offered up the petition, not on their own account, but on ours. See canto xi. 22. 26. " To represent justice, mingled with mercy."—*Landino.*

While to the opposing bank the other crossed;
So that between the two the shades remained.
Their bright and shining hair I plainly viewed,
But in their faces was mine eyesight lost,
As by excess of brilliancy subdued.
"From Mary's bosom hither they proceed 37
As guardians of the vale," Sordello said,
"Against the serpent, who will come with speed."
Not knowing whence the foe might come, aside
Sudden I turned, and all congealed with dread,
Clung to the trusted shoulder of my guide.
"To those exalted shades within the vale 43
Let us descend," Sordello now renewed;
"The sight of you they will with pleasure hail."
Three steps sufficed to bring me down below,
When one intently eyeing me I viewed,
As if my features he desired to know.
It was the hour when night was gathering round, 49
Though not so dark as to exclude from sight
What late was shrouded in that verdant ground —
When we approaching, each to each drew near.
O Nino, noble Judge! with what delight,
Safe from the abode of guilt, I saw thee here!
No greetings kind were spared on either side. 55
Then asked he: "To the foot of this fair hill
When didst thou come, from o'er the distant tide?"
I answered him: "From out the realms of woe,
This morn I came, the first life breathing still,
Though striving for the second as I go."
Soon as my answer fell upon their ear 61
Sordello and the spirit backward drew,
Like persons suddenly assailed by fear.
One turned to Virgil;—one addressed a shade
Who sat there crying: "Conrad, up, and view
The grace of God here signally displayed."
Accosting me:—"By that great debt you owe 67

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37. *i. e.* That part of heaven where Mary dwells. 53. Nino di Gallura was a powerful chief of Pisa, and Lord or Judge of Gallura in Sardinia. Although he is a Guelf, Dante speaks of him with affection, and delight at finding him in Purgatory instead of in Hell. 63. Alarmed at Dante's having told them he was alive. 65. Conrad Malespin- See line 109.

To Him who hides from all his secret way,
Unfordable to mortal man below—
When you have crossed again the swelling main,
Bid my Giovanna that for me she pray
To Him from whom the pure an answer gain.
The love to me that once her mother bare,
Was quenched, the day she doffed that widow's dress,
Which in her misery she again would wear.
And by this one example we may see
How evanescent woman's love, unless
The sight and touch relume it frequently.
So fair a sepulture will ne'er confer
The viper, which the field of Milan shows,
As would Gallura's bird have granted her."
As thus he spoke, his countenance expressed
The stamp of that indignant zeal, which glows
With well attempered ardour in the breast.
On heaven meanwhile was fixed my eager eye,
Where move the stars with slower impulse rolled,
Like to those spokes which near the axle lie.
"My son, why look'st thou up?" the guide inquired.
I answered: "Those three torches to behold,
With which the pole above throughout is fired."
Then he to me: "The four bright stars this morn
Beheld by thee, have yonder sunk below,
And, since arisen, these three their place adorn."
To him Sordello somewhat nearer drew,
Exclaiming: "There behold our dreaded foe,"
Pointing the finger to direct his view.

70. When you have crossed the sea interposed between the earth and Purgatory; *i. e.* when you have returned to earth, bid my daughter Giovanna offer up prayers for me. 73. After Nino's death, his widow Beatrice, sister of Azzo VIII. of Este, one of the most powerful tyrants of Italy, and chief of the Guelf party, married Galeozzo Visconti, son of Matteo, the ambitious ruler of Milan. 80. The crest of Galeozzo, her new husband—the ensign also of the Milanese. 81. The cock was the ensign of Gallura, where Nino ruled. "She will not," says Nino, "die with such fair fame as if she had preserved her faith and love to me." 86. Towards the antarctic pole, where the apparent motion of the stars is slow. 91. The four bright stars of the first canto—signifying the four cardinal virtues, said to rise in the morning. 93. The three stars which succeed towards evening, are the three evangelical virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity.

On that side of the little vale where stood 97
No fence, a serpent lay,—perhaps the same
Which tempted Eve to pluck the bitter food.
Among the herbs and flowers his wily track
The snake pursued, oft turning as he came
His head, and licking, like a beast, his back.
I saw not, and I therefore cannot tell 103
When moved those hawks celestial—but that they
Had left their station, I discerned full well.
Hearing their verdant pinions cleave the air,
The serpent flies:—the Angels turn away,
And to their posts with equal flight repair.
That shade which to the Judge, when called, drew nigh,
Throughout the whole of this affray had still 110
Ne'er ceased to fix on me his stedfast eye.
" So may the lamp that guides thee with its light
Find ample wax," he said, " in thy free will,
To speed thee upward to the flowery height,
As any certain news thou may'st relate 115
Of Valdimagra, or that country near,
Where I in days now passed away, was great:
Conrado Malaspina was my name—
Sprung from the elder one:—the love I bare
To mine own race, here burns with purer flame."
" Oh, never have I seen thy land," I said; 121
" But where throughout all Europe may be found
The spot to which thy glory hath not spread?
The fame that o'er this house such lustre throws
Makes both its nobles and the land renowned;
E'en he who ne'er was there, their greatness knows.
I swear by all my hopes to mount on high— 127
The name thy offspring won, both by the sword
And generous deeds, they do not now belie.

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100. The serpent comes among herbs and flowers, *i. e.* among worldly delights and pleasures, to deceive man. 104. So called, because they had wings, and came to chase away the hostile serpent. 109. Conrad Malespina, who approached Nino, the Judge of Gallura, when he cried (line 65) "Up Conrad." He was Marquis of Lunegiana, and father of Morello Malespina, who received Dante during his exile. 112. *i. e.* May your free-will so co-operate with divine grace, that you may be enabled to ascend the terrestrial Paradise. 116. That country is Lunigiana, of which he had been Marquis.

Habit and nature have such grace bestowed,
That though the world pursues a vicious Lord,
Upright alone they spurn the evil road."
"Wherefore proceed, for in that couch," he said, 133
"Which Aries doth with his four feet impress,
Seven times shall not the sun repose his head,
Ere the kind sentiment thou dost profess
Shall in thy head be fixed with firmer nail
Than by the force of others' speech, unless
The unerring course of heavenly Justice fail." 139

CANTO IX.

ARGUMENT.

Dante sees a vision. In the mean time, he is carried up the mountain by Lucia, and he finds himself at the gate of Purgatory. He intreats the Angel, sitting there, to open it, and is admitted together with Virgil.

FORTH from her lover's arms, arrayed in white, 1
The beauteous concubine of Tithon old
Was decking her above the eastern height:—
Shone with refulgent gems her radiant brow,
Placed in the figure of the Scorpion cold,
Who smiteth nations with his tail;—and now
Two steps of her ascent had Night attained, 7
And at the third already drooped her wing,
Within the valley where we still remained—
When I, who Adam's flesh around me bore,
Upon the grass lay deeply slumbering,
Where all we five together sate before.
What time the martlet pours her plaintive strain, 13
Saluting the approach of morning grey,
Thus haply mindful of her former pain;
And when the spirit roves with highest flight
Beyond its earthly tenement of clay;—
Viewing the future with prophetic sight,

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131. Pope Boniface VIII. See canto xvi. 100, 105. 136. *i. e.* Thou shalt be confirmed in thy good opinion of Valdimagra;—referring to the hospitality experienced by Dante seven years after in the house of Malespina.

12. Virgil, Dante, Sordello, Nino, and Conrad Malespina. 15. *i. e.* The pain suffered by Progne on being changed into a swallow, after the injury done her by Tereus.

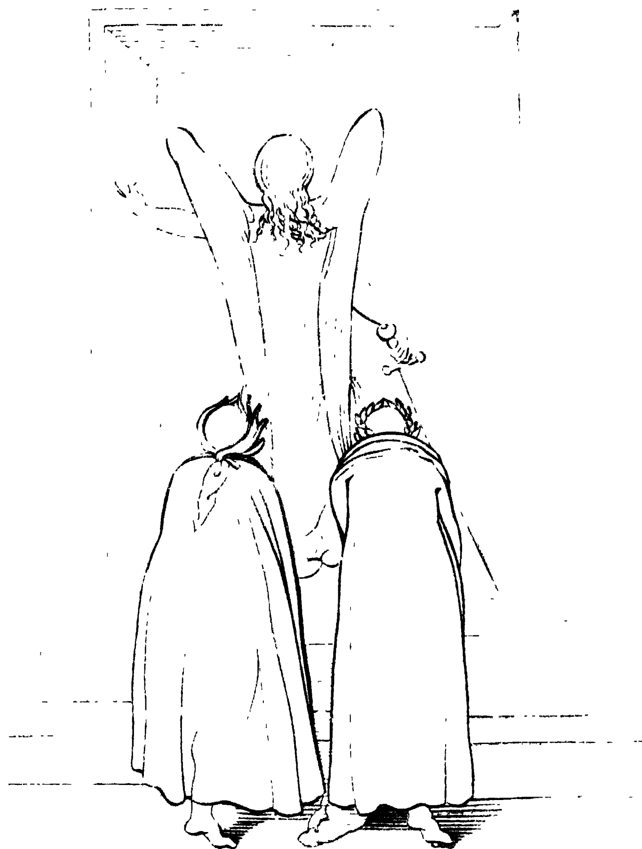
Caught in a vision, seemed I to behold
An eagle in the sky with open wing,
Prepared to swoop—his plumes of radiant gold;
And in that very spot I seemed to be,
Whence Ganymede, his friends abandoning,
Was snatched to Heaven's most high consistory.
Methought that here perhaps to strike his prey
His custom is;—perhaps from other place
His prize towards Heaven he scorneth to convey.
Then, having wheeled around in many a spire,
He swooped like lightning, terrible to trace,
And bore me upward to the sphere of fire.
There, as it seemed, we both were wrapt in flame;
And that imagined fire so fiercely burned,
It broke my sleep, swift darting through my frame.
E'en as Achilles started in dismay,
When his awakened eyes around he turned,
Unable to discover where he lay,
(From Chiron when his mother in her arms
To Scyros' isle conveyed him, as he slept,
Whence the Greeks summoned him to war's alarms;)
E'en so I started, when my slumber fled:
A death-like paleness o'er my features crept,
As when the blood is changed to ice through dread.
My comforter alone was at my side;
Two hours and more the sun in heaven rode high,
And I had turned me towards the ocean tide;
When said my lord: "Fear not, securely stand;
For know that we a goodly place are nigh;
Relax not, but thy every force expand.
Now art thou near to Purgatory:—lo,
There is the ledge which circles it around;
And there the entrance, which that cleft doth show.
Ere the first streak that tells the approach of morn,
Whenas thy spirit was in slumber bound,
Amid the flowers which that fair vale adorn,
A lady came, and 'I am Lucia,' said:
'Him who is sleeping let me bear away,
That in his journey I may give him aid.'
Sordello and those gentle forms remained:

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55. St. Lucia, or Heavenly grace. See Inf. ii. 97.

Thee she took up; and soon as broke the day,
While I pursued her, she this summit gained.
She laid thee here; and when her eyes all bright
Had pointed out the open gate to me,
Together with thy sleep, she took her flight."
Like to a man whose doubts are solved—his fear
For comfort now exchanged, as soon as he
The truth discovers manifest and clear—
E'en so I changed; and when my escort viewed
My tranquil visage, towards the lofty cliff
He moved, and upwards I his steps pursued.
Reader, thou seest how I exalt my theme;
Wherefore with more ingenious labour if
I now support it, this no wonder deem.
Arriving nearer, we a station reach,
Whence at the first a cleft appeared in view,
(As in a wall might show a narrow breach.)
A gate I saw; and leading to it were
Three steps of different hues; a Porter too,
Who spake no word as yet, was stationed there
I saw, when frequent I had looked again,
That on the upper step he sat—so bright,
My dazzled sense could not his face sustain
A naked falchion brandished he on high,
Which o'er us shed such overpowering light,
Oft as I gazed I turned away mine eye.
"Tell me from where ye stand what is your will?"
He then began; "and tell me where your guide?
See, lest your coming hither work you ill"
"A heavenly lady, of your rules aware,
Thus lately counselled us," the bard replied;
"In that direction go,—the gate is there."
"And may she bring you to a happy end,"
The courteous Warder of the gate returned:—
"Come forward then, and these our steps ascend"
Thither we went.—The lower step was made
Of marble white, so smooth, that I discerned
My looks, as in a polished glass pourtrayed.
More dark than purple was the second's hue,

77. The Porter is the same as the Angel, line 103. "To him the Porter openeth." John x. 3. 86. The Angel did not recognise Virgil as a proper guide, and was proceeding to treat Dante as an intruder.



"NOW ENTER, HE EXCLAIMED" Purg IX 130

Fashioned of stone, with rugged surface dry,
  And cracked throughout its length, and crossway too.
The third, heaped up into a massy plane,
  Seemed as it were of flaming porphyry,
  Red as the blood that gusheth from a vein.
On this the Angel rested both his feet,
  While on the threshold, which appeared to be
  One rock of diamond, he maintained his seat.
Up the three steps I went with willing mind,
  Conducted by my guide, who said to me:
  "Ask humbly that the fastening he unbind."
Devout I fell before his presence blest,
  And cried: "Have mercy, and the gate unbar:"
  But first I smote three times upon my breast.
Then with his pointed sword the Angel traced
  Seven P's upon my brow, and said: "Take care,
  When entered in, to have them all erased."
Ashes or earth, fresh dug, and gathered new,
  Of the same colour with his garb would be;
  And from beneath its folds two keys he drew.
Silver was one, the other gold; the white
  He handled first: then of the yellow key
  Such use he made as gave my heart delight.
"Whenever there is fault in either key,
  So that the lock cannot be lightly moved,"
  He said, "this passage may not opened be.
One is more precious, but, with art refined,
  And perfect skill, the other's use is proved;
  Wherefore by that the knot is disentwined.
St. Peter gave them me; and bade me err
  In opening, rather than in making fast,
  Where humble sinners earnest suit prefer.
Now enter," he exclaimed: "but bear in mind,
  (Striking the sacred wicket as we passed)
  Return must he who casts a look behind."
When in the crooked hinges had turned round
  The swivels of that venerable gate,
  Which, formed of metal, grated with harsh sound—
Rung not Tarpeia, nor so loudly roared,

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113. The seven "P.'s" denote the seven sins, (Peccata), from which Dante was to be cleansed one by one, as he passed through the seven rounds of Purgatory. 136. Julius Cæsar broke into the Roman trea-

When good Metellus yielded to his fate,
And the old rock was plundered of its hoard.
At the first crash, intent I turned to hear, 139
When voices mingled with the sweetest lay,
Chaunting "Te Deum," burst upon mine ear.
Such rapture did that moving strain inspire,
As when the organ on some holy day
Blends with the voices of the sacred choir,
Which now swell loud, now melting die away. 145

CANTO X.

ARGUMENT.

The gate of Purgatory. The first circle is assigned to the punishment of the proud. In the white marble rock are sculptured stories of persons eminent for humility. A troop of spirits arrive, who, bent to the ground under the weight of great stones, are expiating their pride

ENTERED within the threshold of that gate, 1
Of which depraved affection mars the use,
Making the crooked path appear the straight
I heard it shut behind me with loud sound:
And had mine eyes looked back, oh! what excuse,
Such crime to expiate, had been worthy found?
Up through a hollow way we urged our feet, 7
Girt by the shifting rocks on either side,
Like waves that now advance and now retreat.
"No little diligence it will require,"
Exclaimed the bard, "our wary feet to guide,
As here or there the massive walls retire."
So slow our steps, as thus with care we tread, 13
The moon already with diminished round
Had sunk to rest within her briny bed,
Ere we emerged from out that narrow track.
But when we freely stood on open ground,
Where the contracted mountain falleth back,
I, wearied out—both doubtful of our way, 19

---

sury on the Tarpeian rock, when Metellus, who endeavoured to defend it, being overpowered, the ancient doors opened with a dreadful crash, and "the hoarded wealth of ages was displayed." See Lucan, Phars. iii. 153.

5. See last canto, line 132.

Halted upon a solitary ledge,
Lonelier than ever path through desert lay
Its width from where the rock ascends on high,
To the gulf's margin at its lowest edge,
With thrice the stature of a man might vie:
And far as could my eyesight wing its aim, 25
First to the right, then to the other flank,
Its width throughout appeared to be the same.
To walk thereon we had not yet essayed,
When I perceived that the surrounding bank,
Which all attempt to scale its sides forbade,
Was marble white,— with sculpture so adorned, 31
Not only Polycletes it defied;
But Nature too had felt her talents scorned.
The Angel who glad tidings brought to man
Of that long wished for peace, which opened wide
The gates of heaven, and brake the ancient ban,
So sculptured to the full reality, 37
Seemed here in gracious attitude to stand,
No silent image he appeared to be ;—
One might have sworn that he was uttering "Hail!"
For she was also imaged here, whose hand
Did turn the key, and with high Love prevail;
E'en as she pictured these same words in act, 43
"Behold the handmaid of the Lord"—exprest,
As clearly as on wax a stamp exact.
"Confine thy mind not to a single part,"
Said my dear lord, who kept me near his breast,
There where in living persons beats the heart
Wherefore I turned mine eyes, as thus he said, 49
And saw behind the Virgin (on that side
Where stood the master who my footsteps led)
Another history on the rock impressed :
Then drew I nearer, passing by my guide,
That it might be more clearly manifest.
In the same marble were engraven there, 55
Bearing the holy ark, the steers and wain;
Whence man officious duties may beware.

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40. "And the Angel came in unto her and said: Hail! thou that art highly favoured."— Luke i. 28. The humility of the Virgin is the example proposed. 56. See, 1 Samuel vi. 14, &c.

Into seven choirs divided, led the way
A multitude, that made my senses twain
Declare, the one, "They sing:" the other "Nay:"
E'en so, the smoking incense there expressed,
Made discord rise betwixt the sight and smell;
And "yes" and "no" alternate swayed my breast.
Before the holy vessel might one see
The Psalmist dancing, as the Scriptures tell:
And more than king, yet less that hour was he.
Forth from the palace window where she stood,
Was Michal represented looking on;
Like lady in disdainful, angry mood
Behind her, shining in the marble white,
Another image my attention won;
Wherefore I moved to gain a nearer sight.
Here was set forth in all his majesty
That Roman prince, whose noble act impelled
Saint Gregory to his mighty victory:—
Trajan I speak of, gloriously pourtrayed:—
And there his horse's rein a widow held,
In garb of misery and tears arrayed.
And round about him flocked full many a knight;
High o'er whose heads throughout the extended plain
Waved in the wind the golden eagles bright.
'Mid these, the sorrowing lady seemed to say.
"O king, avenge me, for my son is slain,
And grief at heart consumes my life away."
And he appeared to answer her: "Then wait
Till I return;" and she; "O king, (as one
Impatient rendered by her hapless fate)
But should'st thou not return?"—"My heir," said he,
Will give thee aid;" and she: "Thy part undone,
What will the deeds of others profit thee?"
"Console thee, now," he said; "for it is meet,
Ere I depart, my duty I fulfil;

65. See Samuel vi. 14, &c.

77. The story is, that while the Emperor Trajan was riding at the head of the Roman army, he was so overcome by the prayers of a widow, whose son had been murdered, that he left the army and returned to Rome to avenge her. St. Gregory is said to have been so affected on reading this story, as to have offered up prayers for Trajan's deliverance from Limbo, and to have procured his translation into Paradise,—the "victory" alluded to. See Par. xx. 45.

So Justice bids, and Pity stays my feet."
He, in whose sight can nothing new appear,
Wrought in the rock this speaking visible,
Wondrous to us, because not met with here.
Whilst I contemplated with fond delight 97
These forms with such humility endowed,
And, for their Maker, precious to my sight!
The poet whispered:—" Lo! this way proceed,
Slowly advancing on, a numerous crowd;
These to the lofty steps our course will lead."
Mine eyes, which now were earnestly intent 103
To see new things on which they love to dwell,
Soon as I heard his voice, tow'rds him were bent.
Yet O my reader, shrink not in dismay
From lofty aim, by listening, as I tell,
How God designs that we our forfeit pay.
Dwell not on torment that will soon be past; 109
Consider rather that these sufferings dire
May not at worst the judgment day outlast.
"The forms that are advancing," I began,
"Far as my baffled sight can guess, O sire,
Bear surely no similitude to man."
He answered me: "The hardships of their fate 115
To earth so closely weigh these spirits down,
E'en I at first could scarce discern their state.
But try to unravel with observance keen
What is approaching under every stone;
How each doth smite his breast may now be seen."
O haughty Christians! wretched, weary race! 121
Who seeing darkly with the mental eye,
Upon your backward steps reliance place!—
Perceive ye not that grovelling worms ye are,
Born to become the angelic butterfly,

---

102. The higher circles of Purgatory. 106. "And therefore be thou not curious how the ungodly shall be punished and when; but inquire how the righteous shall be saved, whose the world is, and for whom the world is created."—2 Esdras ix. 13. 125. The soul itself was deemed of old to be aptly designated under the emblematical form of a butterfly, which, having emerged from the chrysalis state, flutters in the air, instead of continuing to crawl on the earth, as it did, before the worm it once was, ceased to exist.—The soul, set free, flies upwards to receive its reward, and assume its angelic duties.

Which, unrestrained, to Justice doth repair?
Wherefore do ye so loftily aspire? 127
Insects ye are, made but imperfectly,
Like worms in embryo, not of form entire.
As to support a roof or ceiling, oft
A figure doth a bracket's place supply,
The knees upgathered to the breast aloft,—
The unreal pain excites compassion true 133
In him who sees it; such, when I explore
These forms minutely, they appear to view.
They were contracted either more or less,
According to the burden that they bore;
And he who most of patience did possess,
Seemed, weeping, to exclaim, "I can no more." 139

CANTO XI.

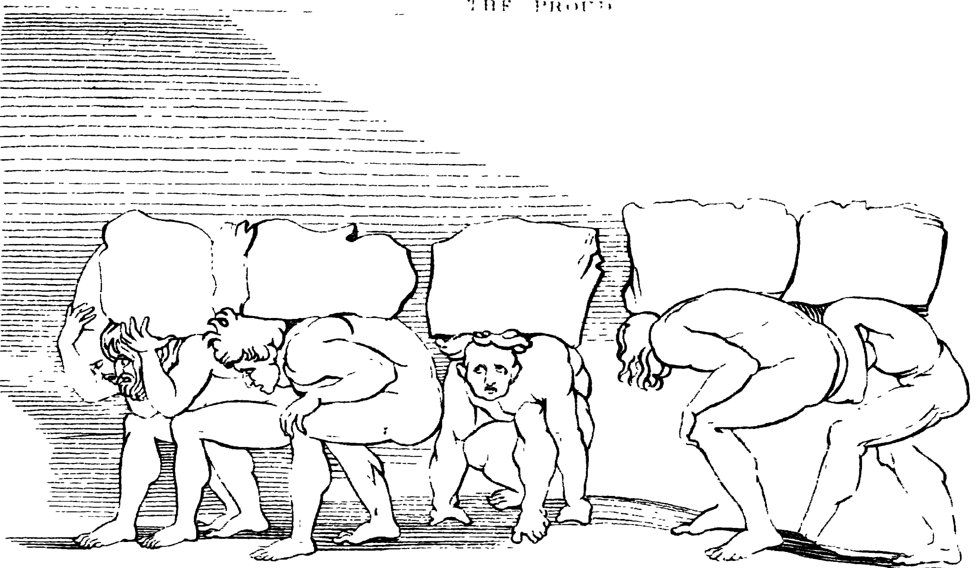
ARGUMENT.

A paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, supposed to be sung by the spirits Virgil inquires the way, and is answered by Omberto. Oderisi d'Agobbio, the illuminator. Salvani of Provence.

"O Thou our Father who dost dwell in heaven, 1
Not circumscribed, but by the greater love
To thy first works in those high regions given—
Let every creature magnify thy name;
And praising Thee enthroned in power above,
Thy wondrous acts with thankful voice proclaim.
O may to us thy kingdom's peace arrive; 7
For if not sent by Thee to man below,
With all our efforts fruitlessly we strive.
As Angels sacrifice their will to Thine,
Chaunting Hosannas in thy courts—e'en so
May man to Thee his every will resign.
Our daily manna give us day by day: 13
If that be wanting, in this desert rude
He backward goes, who most would speed his way.

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8. "No man can come unto me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day."—John vi 44.
15. "There is one that laboureth and taketh pains, and maketh haste, and he is so much the more behind."—Ecclesiasticus xi. 11.



HOSE SHADES WERE JOURNEYING ON [illegible]
LIKE THAT WHICH OFTEN [illegible] IN DREAMS [illegible]

As we forgive the wrongs that we receive
At others' hands—do Thou, benign and good,
Weigh not our imperfections—but, forgive.
Risk not the virtue of a race so frail 19
In struggle with our old inveterate foe;
But Thou deliver when his shafts assail
Not for ourselves, dear Lord, (we have no need)
Do the last words of this petition flow;—
For those we left on earth we intercede."
For them and us so praying fair success, 25
Those shades were journeying on beneath a weight
Like that which often doth in dreams oppress,—
All racked with varied suffering, as they go
Round the first cornice, weary of their fate,
Purging the gloom contracted here below.
If then for us they offer ceaseless prayer, 31
What should be done, their kindness to requite,
By those on earth who Heaven's high favour share?
To wash away the stains collected here
'Tis meet we give them aid; that pure and light
They may ascend unto the starry sphere
"Ah! so may Justice, so may Pity ease 37
Your burdens soon, that ye may spread anon
Your wings to bear you wheresoe'er ye please—
As ye direct how we the stair may reach
Most speedily,—or if more ways than one,
The easiest of ascent we pray you teach.
For this my comrade, owing to the weight 43
Of Adam's flesh, with which he still is clad,
Mounts, spite his better will, at tardy rate."
Words straight were heard to answer the request
Thus by my faithful escort gently made;
Though who pronounced them was not manifest;
But this was said; "Now follow on the right 49
Along the ledge, and you will find such track
As may be mounted by a living wight;
And were I not impeded by the stone
Which curbs the pride of my imperious back,
And forces me to hold my visage down,
Him would I look at, who, untold his name, [illegible]
Is still alive, if I might know his face,
And for this burden his compassion claim.

A Tuscan was my sire, of high degree,
Aldobrandeschi, of the Latin race,
Though ne'er perhaps his name was heard by thee.
The glories of my house, and ancient birth 61
Made me so proud and arrogant, that I,
Forgetful of our common mother, earth,
Looked down with such contempt on all below
As cost my life:—Siena bade me die;—
This each one knows in Campagnatico.
I am Omberto:—not myself alone, 67
But all my comrades by their lofty pride
Into misfortune have been also thrown.
For such offence am I condemned to bear
This heavy load, till God be satisfied:—
What I forbore on earth, I practise here."
To catch these words, I stooped my head below; 73
And one of them,—but not the same who spoke,
Turned him beneath the weight that bowed him so,
And recognized, and called me,—keeping bent
His eye upon me with laborious look,
As, crouching down, along with them I went.
"Art thou not Oderisi," I exclaimed, 79
"The glory of Agobbio and that art
In Paris erst illumination named?"
"More smiling, brother, are the sheets that bear
The trace of Franco's hand," he said;—"in part
The glory mine, but his the greater share.
I had not been thus courteous, I confess, 85
While yet in bonds of human flesh detained;
Such thirst of praise did all my soul possess.
Here, of such pride the penalty is paid:
Nor should I even this abode have gained,
But that to God, while yet on earth, I prayed.
O the vain boast of human faculties— 91
The verdure swiftly fading from on high,
Unless dark ages presently arise!
In painting, Cimabuë thought the field

---

67. Omberto, the son of Guglielmo Aldobrandeschi, Count of Santafiore, in the territory of Siena, so provoked the Sienese by his arrogance that they murdered him at Campagnatico. 94. Cimabue, a Florentine, was one of the first that contributed to the restoration of painting in Italy

Was all his own,—now Giotto has the cry,
And bids his predecessor's glory yield.
In letters, so one Guido hath suppressed 97
The other's fame; and haply he is living,
Destined to chase the twain from out their nest.
Nought but a gust of wind is worldly fame,
Now from this quarter, now from that arriving,
And bearing with each change a different name.
Think'st thou thy glory will be less or more, 103
Whether thou'dst died among thy toys, or old
Thou shuffle off thy mortal coil, before
A thousand years are past—a shorter space,
If 'gainst eternity its sum be told,
Than wink of eye to orbs of slowest pace?
He labouring onward there, possessed a fame 109
That once throughout all Tuscany resounded;
Siena now scarce whispers of his name,
There where he governed, and compelled to bow
The rage of Florence—all her schemes confounded—
Florence, as haughty then, as abject now.
Your fame is like the grass, whose varying hue 115
Doth come and go—by that same sun destroyed
From whose warm ray its vigour first it drew."
"Thy just discourse, with meekness," I exclaim,
"Tempers my heart, by pride no longer buoyed:
But he of whom thou spakest, tell his name."
"This, Provenzan Salvani," he replied; 121
"Here placed—because with grasping hands he made
Siena his, through overweening pride.
Thus hath he moved—thus moves, devoid of rest,

Dante alludes to the epitaph he wrote on himself, "Credidit ut Cimabos picturæ castra tenere, Certe sic tenuit; nunc tenet astra poli." 97. Guido Cavalcanti, a great poet and friend of Dante (see Inf x. 62), had eclipsed the fame of Guido Guinicelli, a Bolognese, much celebrated in his time. 99. Dante is generally supposed to predict here his own future fame. 103. *i. e.* A thousand years are nothing compared with eternity; yet, before this short space of time is elapsed, your boasted reputation will have perished. 109. Provenzano Salvani (line 121), a distinguished Sienese General, who commanded his countrymen in the battle of Mont Aperti. See Inf. x. 86. and notes. He humbled himself so far for the sake of one of his friends, who was detained in captivity by Charles I. of Sicily, as personally to supplicate the people of Siena to contribute the sum required by the king for his ransom.

Since his decease; such ransom must be paid
By those who, too presumptuous, have transgressed."
"If it be true," I said, "he who delays 127
Repentance till the close of life draws near,
Mounts not, but down below his doom obeys
As long a time as he on earth remained,
Unless he be relieved by friendly prayer,—
How happens it he here admittance gained?"
"His glory at the highest"—he replied, 133
"Free in Siena's market place he stood,
Throwing all fear of ridicule aside;
And there, to save his comrade from the pain
Endured in Charles's prison, he subdued
His soul to that which shook his every vein.
I say no more; and dark has been my speech; 139
But soon thy neighbours shall demean them so,—
Events the import of my words shall teach:
This deed released him from the rounds below."

CANTO XII.

ARGUMENT.

Instances of pride engraven on the rocky pavement. Lucifer—Saul—Rehoboam. Alcmæon. Sennacherib. Holophernes. Ilion. The Poets are conducted by an Angel to the stairs which lead up into the second circle.

LIKE oxen drawing in the yoke we went, 1
I, and that overburdened soul a-breast,
Long as the loved preceptor gave consent.
But when he said—"Now leave him, and proceed;
For both with sails and oars it here were best
That each one, as he may, his vessel speed;"—
Erect, e'en like to one prepared in haste 7
To urge his way, my person I upreared—
My thoughts the while bent downward and abased.

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139. Dante here alludes to his own exile, and as Ugo Foscolo observes, "discovers an exact portrait of himself in a man who, stripping himself of all shame, and trembling in his very vitals, places himself in the public way, and stretches out his hand for charity." 142. *i. e.* This act of humility and friendship exonerated Salvani from the usual penance in the lower regions of the mountain, which those who have delayed repentance undergo previously to their entrance into Purgatory.

Then moved I on, and followed willingly
My master's steps; and even now appeared,
As both advanced, how light of foot were we:
When, "Bend thine eyes below," to me he said;
"To ease thine onward journey 'twill be good
To explore the ground that forms thy footstep's bed."
As, in memorial of the dead, are seen
Above their earthly tombs engravings rude,
Bearing the trace of what they once have been;
At sight whereof the tear oft starts anew,
When sad remembrance stings the thoughtful mind
With pangs felt only by the pious few;—
Such saw I here,—but fairer to behold,
As by the rules of perfect art designed,
Far as the cornice did the mount enfold.
Him, who was fashioned noblest above all
Created beings, from the height of heaven
Beheld I, on one side, like lightning fall:
On the other, lay, stretched ponderous o'er the ground,
Briareus' form, with shaft celestial riven,
By death's chill hand, in icy fetters bound.
There, Thymbra's God, there Pallas, Mars I viewed
In arms around their mighty Father stand—
Eyeing the giant limbs beside them strewed.
Nimrod I saw beneath his lofty tower,
As though confounded—gazing on the band
Who mocked in Sennaar's plain the Almighty power.
O Niobe, with what o'erflowing eyes
Thee 'mid thy slaughtered children I surveyed;
Seven on each side the road in wretched guise!
O Saul, what death-like hue thy features wore—

15. These warnings against pride are not placed on the side of the rock, as were the examples of humility in the last canto, but on the pavement, to show the complete debasement required to rid ourselves of this vice. 25. Lucifer or Satan—once an Angel of light. 29. "Briareus' huge immeasurable frame."—Inf. xxxi. 99. 31. Thymbra's God is Apollo. The Deities who assisted Jupiter in the war with the Giants are represented gazing in wonder on the effects of their Father's vengeance. 36. The builders of Babel on the plain of Sennaar. 37. Niobe was the wife of Amphion, king of Thebes. Inflated with pride at the number of her family (seven sons and seven daughters), she ordered the Thebans to sacrifice to her instead of to Latona; on which the sons of Latona were so incensed that they slew all Niobe's children.

In mount Gilboa, fallen upon thy blade!
That mount by dew or rain ne'er freshened more.
There saw I thee, Arachne, foolish one, 43
Half spider now,—distrest—upon the thread
Of that rich work in evil moment spun.
O Rehoboam, not with threatening brow
Appears thy form; but struck with mortal dread:
Ere foes pursue, a chariot bears thee now.
Alcmæon on the rocky pavement wrought 49
Appeared, what time he made his mother rue
The fatal ornaments so dearly bought.
There was depicted how within the fane
Sennacherib's sons their swords upon him drew;
And how they left him there, so foully slain.
There were the slaughter and the carnage viewed 55
Which Tomyris made, when she to Cyrus said:
"For blood thou thirstedst—quench thy thirst with [blood."
There too was pictured the Assyrians' flight,
When Holophernes, the brave chief, was dead;
And there the relics of the murderous fight.
Troy I beheld in dust and ruin laid;— 61
O haughty Ilion, how wert thou debased,
In woeful plight upon the rock pourtrayed!
What mighty master of his pencil He,
By whom such forms and attitudes were traced
As lofty genius would with wonder see?

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42. "Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you." 2 Samuel i. 21. 43. Arachne defied Minerva's skill in weaving; on which the enraged Goddess turned her into a spider. 46. Rehoboam's tyranny induced Israel to rebel against him. "Therefore king Rehoboam made speed to get him up into his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem." 1 Kings xii. 18. 49. Alcmæon slew his mother Eriphyle, for suffering herself to be bribed, by the present of a rich jewel, to discover the retreat of her husband, Amphiaraus, who was concealed to avoid going to the Theban war. See Virgil, Æn. vi. 445. Pur. iv. 103, &c. 53. "And it came to pass, as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his God, that Adrammelech and Sharezer his sons smote him with the sword." 2 Kings xix. 37. 56. "Tomyris," queen of the Scythians, "flying with pretended fear, on being wounded, drew Cyrus into an ambuscade, and slew him, together with two hundred thousand Persians. His head she ordered to be cast into a bladder full of blood, with this reproach for his cruelty: 'Sate thyself with that blood for which thou hast thirsted, and of which thou hast ever been insatiable.'" Justin, i. 8. See Judith xv. 5. 62. Troy is the province—Ilion the

Alive the living—dead appeared the dead;— 67
Nor could reality more clearly show,
Than did the sculpture on that marble bed.
Now swell with pride—pass on with visage high,
Ye sons of Eve! cast not your looks below,
For fear your evil path ye should descry.
Around the mount now further had we wound, 73
And much more of his course the sun had spent,
Than one might deem not wrapt in thoughts profound.
When he, who ever watchful, took the lead,
Cried, "Raise thy head; for would'st thou mount the ascent.
No longer thus absorbed must thou proceed.
Lo, yonder, hastening towards us, on his way, 79
An Angel comes; —and the sixth handmaid now
Returneth from her service on the day.
With reverence deck thy looks, that he may deign
His willing guidance up the mountain's brow:—
This day, bethink thee, ne'er will shine again."
Not to lose time so often had been taught 85
By him who dropped this precept on my ear,
The import it conveyed I fully caught.
The beauteous Creature now more near had drawn,
In white arrayed,—his face as though it were
Lit with the radiance of the star of dawn.
His arms first opening—he his wings outspread:— 91
"Come," he exclaimed, "behold the steps are nigh;
Now may the ascent full easily be made."
Few, few, alas! obey the gracious call!—
O race of mortals, born to mount on high,
How is it at so slight a breath ye fall?
He led us where the rock in twain was riven; 97
Here with his pinion he my forehead beat,
Then promised a safe passage should be given.
As on the right hand—to ascend the ridge,
Where the church vieweth from its lofty seat

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75. Dante had been so intent upon the sculpture under his feet, that he took no note of time. **80.** The handmaids of the day are the hours. **91.** The Angel opens his arms, to show that mercy is offered to all. See canto iii. 121. **98.** In order to remove one of the seven P.'s.—Having mastered pride, his besetting sin, Dante is promised a safe conduct. **101.** The church of San Miniato overlooks Florence, ironically termed "the well ruled city."

The well ruled state, by Rubaconte's bridge—
The daring mount is broken by the stairs 103
Made in a better and a simpler age,
Ere false accounts embarrassed state affairs:
So is relaxed the steepness of the bank,
Falling precipitous from the upper stage;
But either side high rocks enclosing flank.
Broke in such sweetness, as we passed along. 109
"Blest are the poor in spirit," on mine ear,
Words are unequal to describe the song.
Ah! how unlike to these, the straits of hell!
By songs accompanied we enter here,—
There, by laments and imprecations fell.
Now up the holy steps our way we gain; 115
And far more lightly did I seem to move
Than when before I journeyed o'er the plain.
"Say from what painful weight am I relieved,
Master," I cried; "for as I wend above
Scarce by my sense is weariness perceived."
"When all the P.'s upon thy forehead traced, 121
Which still," he said, "though less distinct, remain,
Shall, like the one, be thoroughly effaced,
A zeal, so fervent shall thy feet excite,
They shall not only no fatigue sustain,
But bear thee upward with intense delight."
Then was I like to one who goes along 127
With something on his head,—not knowing aught,
Save that from others' nods there's something wrong;
Wherefore his hand is fain to give him aid,
And seeks, and finds; and hath already wrought
That service which the eye in vain essayed.
And with my right hand's open fingers now 133
Six only of the letters could I trace
He of the keys had graven on my brow;
Whereat a smile came o'er the master's face.

102. The bridge over the Arno. **110.** This is sung on the occasion of the spirits quitting the circle of pride. **127.** This curious simile signifies that we cannot know ourselves till we have mastered pride, which blinds us to all our defects. **135.** The Angel who inscribed the seven P.'s on Dante's forehead. See canto ix. 113.

CANTO XIII.

ARGUMENT.

The second circle. The sin of Envy is here punished. Examples of Charity recounted by invisible spirits. The envious appear, clothed in sackcloth, and having their eyes sown up with an iron thread.—Sapia, a Sienese lady.

Now had we gained the summit of the stairs, 1
There where a second belt the mount divides,
Ascending which, each soul its loss repairs.
Around it doth a circling cornice wind,
Like to the first encompassing the sides,
Save in its circuit, which is more confined.
Nor sculpture here nor image met our view; 7
So smooth the bank and pathway did appear,
Which, like the rock, was of a livid hue.
"If we remain till spirits come this way,
Of whom to inquire," the poet said, "I fear
We may perchance too long our choice delay."
Then on the sun intent he fixed his sight, 13
And wheeling his left shoulder to one side,
As on a pivot turned upon the right.
"O friendly planet, through whose aid," he said,
"I enter this new path, be thou our guide:
By thee all entering here would fain be led.
From thee the world receiveth light and heat; 19
Unless by some necessity impeded,
Thy genial rays should ever guide our feet."
The distance that on earth we call a mile,
Already in short space had we proceeded—
Our will so prompt the journey to beguile—
When spirits flying from the realms above, 25
Heard, but unseen, invited us to taste
The hallowed banquet of celestial love.
The first voice that athwart us flying came,
Exclaimed aloud: "They have no wine;" then passed
Behind, reiterating still the same.

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27. *i. e.* Of charity, as opposed to envy,—the vice punished in this circle. 29. These words of the Virgin at the marriage feast of Cana, are adduced as an instance of charity.

And ere these strains in distance died away,
"I am Orestes"—whirling by, we heard
Another cry; and pass without delay.
"O father," I exclaimed, "what sounds are these?"
And as I made inquiry—lo, a third
Distinctly uttered: "Love your enemies."
"Within this circle," said my guide, "is felt
The lash that envy is condemned to bear;
Therefore its cords by Love's mild hand are dealt:
The bit is wont to sound in other strain;
As I imagine thou thyself wilt hear,
Ere thou the pass of pardon mayst attain.
But through the air attentive stretch thine eye;
And seated in our front, full many a shade
Along the mountain's side wilt thou descry."
Opening mine eyes to take an ampler view,
I saw before me souls in mantles clad,
The livid rock resembling in their hue.
A little further on, these words I heard:
"O Mary, Michael, Peter, who Heaven's throne
Encircle—be your prayers for us preferred."
Walks not a man on earth this day I ween,
So hard of heart, but that he must have known
Some touch of pity for what there was seen.
For tow'rds them when I had approached so near
That e'en their attitudes were plainly shown,
Mine eyes streamed forth with many a bitter tear.
Of sackcloth rude their garment seemed to be;
One on another's shoulder bent him down;
And on the rock all leant dejectedly.
Thus do the blind, in want of daily bread,
Stand in the churches to implore relief;
And one against his neighbour rests his head,
The more a stranger's pity to excite,
Not only by the mournful sound of grief,
But by what strikes the heart no less, the sight.
And as the sun doth ne'er the blind illume;

32. Orestes offered himself to death instead of his friend Pylades. 39. By examples of the opposite virtue. 42. The stair leading to the third circle, where stands the Angel who pardons the crime of envy. 54. "No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity." Shakspeare, Rich. III.

So, to the shades of whom I now discourse,
The light of Heaven ne'er dissipates the gloom.
The lids of all an iron thread doth pierce,
Sewing them up, e'en as a hawk's perforce
Is sewn, to make the savage bird less fierce.
To me it seemed a want of courtesy, 73
Unseen myself, in others' face to peer,
Wherefore I turned to my instructor:—he
The silent wishes of my heart well knew,
And therefore waited not my wish to hear;—
"Speak to the point, and let thy words be few."
Virgil came towards me from that outer bound, 79
Whence easily his feet had slipt below,
Because no bank environs it around:—
Stood on the other hand the shades devout,
Who by the horrid seam were tortured so,
That o'er their cheeks the bitter tears gushed out.
Turning around, "O spirits," I exclaim, 85
"Now certain that exalted Light to see,
The one sole object of your longing aim,—
So from your conscience may the grace of Heaven
Dispel the scum, that thus a channel free
May to the river of your mind be given,—
As you inform me what I long to know— 91
If any Latian soul may here be seen;
Haply to him some benefit may flow."
"We all, my brother, of one city true
Are denizens; but surely thou must mean
One who in Italy did erst pursue
His pilgrimage." These words I seemed to hear 97
A little further on from whence I stood;
Wherefore advancing, I approached more near:
Amid the rest I saw a shade, who in
Her face the marks of expectation showed:
"How?" ask ye?—Like one blind she raised her chin.

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94. *i. e.* "You speak to us as if to men still performing their pilgrimage on earth, and acknowledging distinctions of country. We reck not of any other city but the 'one true city,' destined for us in heaven. You surely therefore mean:" "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." Ephes. ii. 19. "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." Heb. xiii. 14.

"Oh thou," I said, "who dost thy spirit tame
 To mount above ;—if thou an answer gave,
 Inform me who thou art by place or name."
"Know," she replied, "I was a Sienese:—
 Entreating God to assist me, here I lave
 My guilty soul ;—and my companions these.
Sapia my name, though Sapience marked me not;
 And more delight I took in others' sadness
 Than in the happiness that blessed my lot.
And lest my words deceit should seem intending,
 Hear if I was not foolish, e'en to madness :—
 When down the arch my years were now descending,
My citizens, assembled in the field
 Near Colle, were prepared their foes to meet;
 And I prayed God they might be forced to yield:
There routed, were they turned to bitter flight:
 And I, who stood to witness their defeat,
 Indulged in warmest transports of delight;
And upward turned my daring visage,—crying
 To Heaven in joy: "I fear thee now no more;"
 As cried the thrush, one transient gleam espying.
Upon the brink of life, I wished to effect
 My peace with God; but, though repenting sore,
 Still had I suffered for my dire neglect,
Had not Pier Pettinagno kindly thought,
 In his most holy orisons, of me,
 And by his charity deliverance wrought.
But who art thou, who journeying onward seekest
 To know our state, and hast thine eyelids free,
 As I believe thou hast, and breathing, speakest?"
"Mine eyes," I said, "may here be reft of sight—
 But for short time;—the penalty they owe
 For envious looks indulged in, is but slight.
Far greater dread my anxious soul doth own,
 Of the infliction to be borne below;

114. In his Convito, Dante likens human life to an arch—now mounting and now descending. See Trat. iv. 23, 24. 122. Sapia, banished by her countrymen the Sienese, prayed for their defeat, and was so elated with the success of her prayer, that she uttered this impious bravado in defiance of the Almighty. 127. A hermit, who by his prayers accelerated Sapia's admission into Purgatory. 137. *i. e* In the last circle, where the proud are punished. Dante acknowledges himself proud, not envious.

And even now that burden weighs me down."
And she to me: "Inform me who thy guide,
If thither to return thou dost expect."
"Yon silent spirit brought me," I replied;
"And I am living; therefore ask of me,
If thou desire that I, O spirit elect!
Should move on earth my mortal feet for thee."
"Oh! such a novel thing is this to hear,"
She said, "it greatly proves God's love to thee;
Wherefore sometimes assist me with thy prayer;
And by whatever be thy dearest aim,
If e'er thou tread the soil of Tuscany,
I prithee with my kindred clear my fame.
Them wilt thou see amidst that silly race
Whose hopes in Telamon will prove more vain
Than those fond hopes they did in Dian place:
Still more their baffled Admirals shall complain."

CANTO XIV.

ARGUMENT.

The depravity of Italy. Dialogue between Guido del Duca of Brettinora, and Rinieri da Calboli of Romagna. The latter inveighs against the vice and degeneracy of all who live in the vale of Arno. Voices are heard recording instances of envy.

"Who is the man that winds around our hill
Ere death has set his soul at liberty—
Opening his eyes and closing them at will?"
"I know him not: but know he's not alone;—
Ask who he is thyself, for thou art nigh;
And move him to discourse with gentle tone."
Bent tow'rds each other, held such colloquy
Concerning me, two spirits on the right;
Then upward raised their looks to speak to me:
"O soul," one said, "that, in thy mortal clay
Enveloped still, dost take thy heavenly flight—

152. The Sienese hoped by the acquisition of Telamone, a sea-port, to become great; but its situation in the Maremma was so unhealthy that they were obliged to abandon it, after losing many seamen and admirals; and they are said to have incurred great expense in the vain endeavour to discover a stream called Dian supposed to pass under their city.

1. The canto opens with a conversation supposed to pass between two noble Florentines, Guido del Duca, d Rinieri da Calboli of Romagna.

In charity console us; and, O say,
Whence comest thou; and what thy name unfold: 13
For we are wondering at this signal grace,
As at some novel prodigy, untold.
And I: "Through Tuscany a streamlet flows
From Falterona's height, which runs its race
Some forty leagues before it finds repose;—
From its vicinity I drag this frame: 19
To tell thee who I am would be in vain,
So little yet on earth resounds my name."
"Sure, if my intellect embody well
Thy purposed meaning," (he who first began
Then answered me) "thou wouldst of Arno tell."
"But why did he conceal," the other said, 25
"That river's title; as a man forsooth
Abstains from uttering words of import dread?"
The shade who thus was questioned, made reply:
"The cause I know not; but I know in truth,—
Full well that valley's name deserves to die:
For from its source, (there where so frequent teems 31
The lofty range, whence is Pelorus riven,
That but few places so abound in streams,)
E'en to the spot where it restores again
The vapours that the ocean lends to heaven,
(Whence rivers their renewed supplies obtain)
From virtue, all, as from a serpent fly; 37
Whether through influence of a noxious clime,
Or through ill habit's strong necessity:
Therefore the dwellers in that wretched vale
Are so corrupted since the olden time,
You might believe them gorged in Circe's pale.
'Mid filthy swine, deserving more to feed 43
On acorns than such food as man prepares,
This brook at first his abject course doth lead:
Then lower down, 'mong curs condemned to stray,
Grinning with spite, were power of mischief their's,
From them he turns his scornful snout away.
This foss, most hapless, most accurst—the more 49

16. The Arno rises in Falterona, a mountain in the Apennines. 31. *i. e.* From the source of the Arno even to its very mouth (about one hundred and sixty miles) Virtue is exterminated. Pelorus is a mountain in Sicily, said to be riven from the Apennines. 43 The inhabitants of the Casentine. 46. The Aretines.

Its waters fall, with fuller current running,
Of dogs, becoming wolves, finds greater store.
Descending onward then in deeper streams,
It finds the foxes, so replete with cunning,
They fear not to be baffled in their schemes.
Yet will I speak, although another hear,
Who well may let into his memory sink
What a true spirit doth to me declare.—
Already doth thy Grandson meet my sight:—
A hunter of those wolves upon the brink
Of the fell stream, he scatters all in flight.
Their flesh he bartereth while yet alive,
Then slays them like an aged ox:—as these
Of life, himself of fame doth he deprive.
Blood-stained he issues from the mournful wood,
And leaves it such, that in ten centuries
Its pristine vigour may not be renewed."
As, at the announcement of impending woe,
The face of him who listens is perplexed,
In wonder whence will come the threatened blow;
So the other soul, who stood in act to hear,
I saw in countenance perturbed and vexed,
Soon as these words had fallen upon his ear.
The speech of one, the other's troubled air
Filled me with eagerness their names to know;
And I the inquiry made with earnest prayer.
At which the soul that first accosted me,
Resumed: "What I in vain asked thee to show,
That thou desirest I should tell to thee.
But since God wills to manifest so bright
His grace in thee, I will not say thee nay
Guido del Duca know then am I hight.

53. The Pisans. 55. Dante is warned to attend to the following prophecy as interesting to himself. M. Fulcieri de Calboli, grandson of Rinieri, with whom Guido is speaking, was Podestà, or chief magistrate in Florence, in 1302; and was bribed by the Neri to imprison and put to death many distinguished persons among the Bianchi: hence, having called the Florentines 'wolves,' Guido continuing the allegory, calls a grandson of Rinieri, 'the hunter' of those wolves upon the fell river Arno. 64. The "mournful wood" signifies Florence. 67. "It is evident that Dante himself felt severely the words he puts into the mouth of Rinieri." Ottimo Commento. 78. Guido reproaches Dante for his unwillingness to mention his name. See line 19.

My blood was so consumed by envy's flame,
  That if I but beheld another gay,
  A livid hue o'er all my features came:
Such crop I gather from the seed I strewed.
  O race of man! your hopes why fix ye there,
  Where none may be partakers of your good?
This is Rinier, the honour and the pride
  Of the great house of Calboli, whose heir
  No image of his valour hath supplied.
Nor his the only blood betwixt the Po,
  The Rhine, the mountain, and the rolling main,
  Reft of the good which truth and taste bestow.
For all the land within this boundary
  Is filled with stocks so poisonous, that in vain
  Might man long time the force of culture try.
Where is Manardi now, and where the good
  Licio and Traversaro,—Guido great?
  Oh, how degenerate is Romagna's blood,
When in Bologna doth a Fabbro shoot!
  A Bernardin rule o'er Faenza's state,
  A generous offset from a lowly root!
Wonder not, Tuscan, at my grieving thus,
  When Ugolino to my mind I call,
  And Guido, wont to lead his life with us,—
Frederick Tegnoso and his worthy race,
  The Traversari, Anastagi (all
  Now disinherited of ancient grace,)—
The dames, the knights, the labour and the ease
  That wooed us on to love and courtesy,
  Where rancorous envy now all hearts doth seize.

86. "O race of man," exclaims Guido, "why set your heart on earthly goods, which unlike mental and spiritual possessions, are necessarily enjoyed by one person to the exclusion of another, and tend to encourage envy and selfishness?" 99. "Your good and great men of Romagna," he says, "have all vanished—Manardi of Faenza, Licio of Valbona, Traversaro of Ravenna, and Guido di Carpigna of Montefeltro:—and instead, men of low origin, such as Fabbro de' Lambertaci, and Bernardin Fosco have exalted themselves by their talent." 109, 110. "These two lines," says Ugo Foscolo, "have such a charm to Italian ears, that Ariosto, after having sketched a thousand beginnings for his poem, and decided upon an indifferent one, which was printed, finally rejected them all in the second edition, and substituted almost word for word the verses of Dante."

O Brettinoro! why not get thee gone,
Now that thy family have quitted thee,
And many, to avoid contagion, flown?
Bagnacaval doth well not to renew
His line;—ill Castrocaro, Conio worse,
Begetting Counts, a still more worthless crew.
And well shall also the Pagani fare,
What time their Demon dies, the country's curse,
Though ne'er their lost renown shall they repair.
O Ugolin of Fantoli!—thy name
May rest secure, since thou hast none to impeach
By deeds of baseness thy unsullied fame.
But now, O Tuscan, leave me; since I find
Greater delight in weeping than in speech,
So much our converse hath disturbed my mind."
We were aware those friendly spirits heard
Our parting steps; and that we need not fear
Proceeding, from their silence we inferred.
Alone were we advancing on our way,
When, like to lightning as it cleaves the air,
A voice approaching us was heard to say:
"By him who findeth me shall I be slain:"
Then, as when sudden breaks the o'erladen cloud,
And thunder rolls, that spirit fled amain.
Our ears short respite had obtained, when burst
Another voice anon with crash as loud
As when a second clap succeeds the first:—
"I am Aglauros, who was turned to stone."
Whereat, that to the bard I might be near,
I drew me back instead of venturing on.
Now was the air throughout that region still,
When thus he said: "That was the curb severe

112. Guido apostrophizes his native place, Brettinoro, a beautifully situated castle in Romagna, and recommends even it, if possible, to remove elsewhere. 115. Castles in Romagna, here personified as representing their several families. 118. Dante prophetically declares the good that will result to the younger Pagani, lords of Faenza and Imola, on the death of their father Mainardo, or Machinardo Pagani, a man of such craft as to pass by the name of "il Diavolo." 121. Ugolino of Fantoli was a noble and virtuous inhabitant of Faenza. 133. The words of Cain. 139. Daughter of Eriotheus, king of Athens. Envying her sister beloved of Mars, she was changed by him into stone. 143. See canto xiii. 40.

Which ever should restrain man's evil will.
But ye are tempted by the specious lure
Drawn by the hook of the old Enemy;
Nor bit nor call avails to work a cure.
Heaven calls you, and on every side displays,
Its everlasting beauties; but your eye
Still fixes upon earth its longing gaze;
Wherefore He smites you who doth all descry."

CANTO XV.

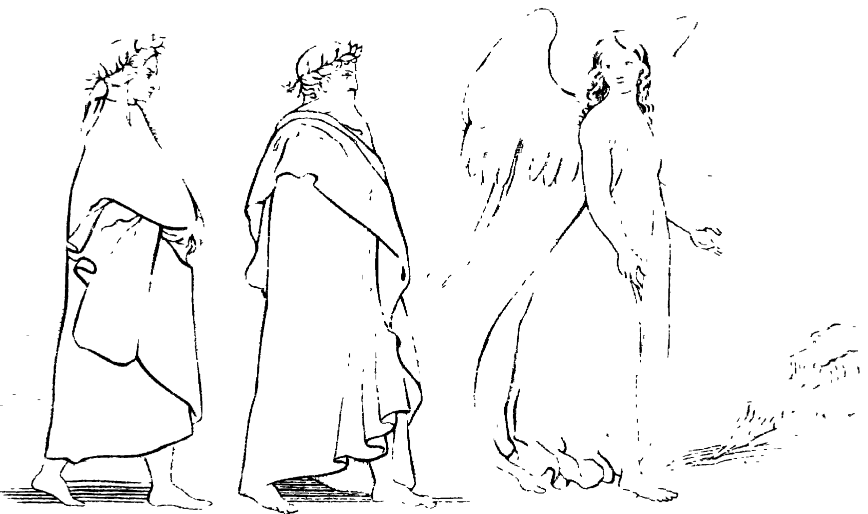
ARGUMENT.

Discourse upon Envy. Virgil explains to Dante the difference between earthly and heavenly good;—the former admitting not participation—the latter increasing by it. Hence Charity in heaven unbounded. The third circle, in which anger is punished. Instances of forbearance. St. Stephen, &c. A dense fog comes on.

As much as, tracing from the third hour's close
Till earliest dawn, appeareth of that sphere
Which like a playful child no quiet knows—
So long a course the sun's declining light
Had still to traverse:—it was evening here,
But upon earth the very noon of night.
His beams assailed us full upon the brow;
For we had so advanced the mountain o'er,
That towards the sunset we were moving now;
When I my forehead felt oppressed with glare
Of dazzling light, far brighter than before;
And stupor seized me from effect so rare.
My hands I raised to guard my aching sight,
And o'er my forehead held them up, to hide
The overpowering effluence of light.
As when from water or a glass, the ray
Bounds from below unto the opposing side,
Ascending upward in the self-same way
That it descended,—equi-distant too

1. In Purgatory it wanted three hours of sunset. On earth, where the poet was writing, it was night or nearly dawn. 3. According to the Ptolemaic system, the sphere or heavens are in a perpetual whirl, and ever restless like a child. 15. The Angel appears,—by whom the brand of envy is removed. 16. This refers to that law in optics which exhibits the angle of reflection always equal to the angle of incidence.

THE POETS CONDUCTED BY AN ANGEL



ENTER, WITH GENTLE VOICE HE SAID, THIS HEIGHT
PRESENTS A STAIR MORE EASIER THAN THE REST.

From the right line a stone would take, impelled
Through the same space, as science shows is true;
So, as it seemed, by a refracted light
Shining in front of me was I assailed;
Wherefore I quickly turned away my sight.
"Loved sire," I asked, "what is it I discern 25
Approaching tow'rds us, and from which mine eyes,
Unable to endure the splendour, turn?"
"Marvel not, if thou still art dazzled by
The ministering attendants of the skies;—
One comes," he said, "to summon man on high.
These glorious sights not long shall give thee pain, 31
But will inspire thee with as much delight
As nature makes thee able to sustain."
When near we came unto the angel blest,
"Enter," with joyful voice he said; "this height
Presents a stair far easier than the rest."
Ascending thence—behind us sang a voice: 37
"Blest are the merciful," in sweetest lay,
"And thou victorious one, do thou rejoice."
Slow up the ascent were labouring on we two—
My guide and I;—I, thinking on my way
That from his speech some profit might accrue;
Then, turning, made I this inquiry: "What 43
Could mean the spirit of Romagna, when
He spoke of good, with others shared or not?"
Then he: "Full well he knows the cost severe
Of his besetting sin;—no marvel then
If man be warned, to abate his suffering here.
Because your wishes to such objects tend 49
As are diminished if another share,
In envy's full blown sighs they ever end.
But if the love of the celestial sphere
To higher objects had allured your care,
Your breast would not be troubled by that fear.
For there the more the expression 'our' we use, 55
So much more good to each one's lot will fall,
And greater warmth will charity diffuse."

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23. The light was reflected upon Dante by the Angel, who was illuminated by God himself. 39. This exclamation is made by the Angel after he has cleansed Dante from the sin of envy. 45. See last canto (line 87), where Guido del Duca denounced the selfishness of envy.

"Now," I replied, "am I far more perplexed
Than if thou had'st not answered me at all;
And with more troublous doubts my mind is vexed:
How can it be, that a possession, shared 61
By many persons, can enrich them more
Than if the same is but on few conferred?"
Then he: "Because thine intellectual sight
Is wholly bent earth's objects to explore,
Darkness thou gatherest from the all-perfect Light.
That Good ineffable which dwells above, 67
As ray to lucid body swift descends,
So, in unbounded fulness speeds to love.
The warmth it finds, the same it still bestows;
And wide soe'er as charity extends,
Beyond it still the eternal Virtue glows.
The more aspirants are there of the sky, 73
More good there is to love, and more is loved,
As mirrors by reflection multiply:
And if a further answer thou request,
See Beatrice, by whom shall be removed
This and each other longing of thy breast.
Exert thee now without delay to efface, 79
E'en as the two, each still remaining wound,
Which due contrition soonest may erase."
I was about to say, "I am content;"
But paused,—when coming to another round,
On novel sights my curious eyes were bent.
There an extatic vision suddenly 85
Seemed to enwrap me; and a multitude
Assembled in a temple met mine eye.
And with a mother's look, methought e'en thus
A lady cried, who on the threshold stood:
"Why, O my son, hast thou so dealt with us?
Behold thy sire and I full many a day 91
Have sought thee sorrowing."—Ceased her gentle strain;
And this first vision floated soon away.

80. *i. e.* "As of the seven wounds inscribed in your forehead by the Angel (ix. 112), two are healed, viz. pride and envy, so do you now take care to heal the remaining five." 85. Here we enter the third circle, in which Anger is punished. 90. "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." St. Luke ii. 48.

Then came in view a matron, from whose eyes
Were streaming down her cheeks such tears amain,
As from indignant wrath are wont to rise.
" If of that city thou art lord," she said,
" Whose name caused discord 'mid the heavenly race,
And where each science doth its lustre shed,
Punish those arms that so audaciously
Presumed our virgin daughter to embrace."
Pisistratus all mildly made reply,
With look benevolent and temperate:
" How shall we treat the man who wills our woe,
If he who loves us meets so harsh a fate ?"—
With fury then inflamed, I saw a crowd
Stoning a youth; and as they struck each blow,
" Away with him, away," they cried aloud.
I saw him, as to earth he bent at last,
Weighed down in death by the o'erpowering blows ;
But stedfast still to heaven his eyes he cast,—
In that dread conflict, to the Lord above
Praying for pardon on his ruthless foes,
With gentle look that doth to pity move.
When to itself my mind returned again,
And on substantial things its aim could keep,
I found my wanderings were not wholly vain.
My guide, remarking my uncertain gait,
Like his who tries to rouse himself from sleep,
Cried: " What comes o'er thee? canst thou not walk
straight ?
Above a mile hast thou thy journey made
With eyes half shut, and reeling to and fro,
Like to a man by wine or slumber swayed."

98. The city of Athens—named after Minerva, Αθηνη. In the fabulous contest between her and Neptune, whether of the two should give name to the city, she produced in the olive, a gift of more value than the horse of her rival. 101. The wife of Pisistratus, tyrant of Athens, urged her husband to put to death a youth, who, in love with their daughter, had kissed her in public. 106. " And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Acts vii. 59, 60. 117. Awakening from his vision, Dante intimates it was not a mere passing dream, but was so far real, that the contemplation of these instances of charity had wrought their effect upon him, and opened his eyes to a more enlarged benevolence.

"Loved sire," I said, "if thou wilt hear my tale,
The dream I witnessed will I strive to show,
What time my tottering limbs appeared to fail."
"Hadst thou a hundred masks upon thy face,"
He answered me, "yet e'en thy very dreams,
And inmost thoughts have I the power to trace.
What thou hast seen Heaven's favour did bestow,
Thy heart to open to the peaceful streams
Which from the Eternal Fountain ever flow.
I asked not, 'what comes o'er thee,' with the intent
Of one whose faculty of sight is gone,
Soon as the soul is from the body rent;
But I inquired, to urge thee to proceed:
Thus it behoves to spur slow loiterers on,
That when the watch returneth, they may speed."
Then towards the west we still pursued our way,
Extending as we went our ravished sight
Against the splendour of the evening ray;
When lo! approaching us, came gradually
A vapour dense and dark as blackest night;
Nor was there shelter whither we could fly:
Our eyes were dimmed, and all obscured the light.

CANTO XVI.

ARGUMENT.

Passing through the dark smoke in which angry souls are wrapt, Dante hears voices praying to the Lamb for mercy. He reasons with one of the spirits, who explains the doctrine of free-will, and attributes the great depravity of the world to the union of temporal and spiritual authority in the person of the Pope.

Nor gloom of Hell, nor shade of blackest night,
When not a star illumes the barren heaven,
And clouds of massy darkness block the light,
My face e'er covered with a veil so dense
As did that murky smoke, around us driven,—

143. The vapour rises from the next circle, in which the wrathful are punished—anger having the effect of blinding the intellect.

1. With this magnificent description of darkness, Dante opens a canto whose object is to show that to the Popes of his time is to be attributed the ignorance and wickedness of the world.

And to the touch, of sharpness so intense.
In vain I strove to keep my eyes unclosed,
Until my faithful escort, drawing near,
His shoulder to assist my steps disposed.
As one bereft of sight behind his guide
Walks, lest he stray and meet some shock severe,
Or aught whence greater evils may betide;
So went I through that foul and pungent air,
List'ning my leader's words, who did not cease
His warning: "How you quit my side, beware."
Voices I heard; and each appeared to pray
Unto the Lamb for pardon and for peace—
The Lamb of God that taketh sins away;
And "Agnus Dei" was their prelude still.
All in one measure, in one voice unite;
And perfect concord seemed to rule their will.
"Are spirits these we hear?" I then inquire.
He gave me answer: "Thou hast guessed aright;
They loose the fetters of their former ire."
"Now who art thou who through our smoky air
Passest along, and speakest of our band,
As one who still by calends counts the year?"
Thus spake a single voice; whereat my guide:
"Return an answer to them, and demand
If this way leadeth up the mountain's side."
And I: "Thou, who dost cleanse thee, to return
Pure to thy great Creator, follow me;
And things of wondrous import shalt thou learn."
"Follow I will, far as I may," he said,
"And if the smoke permit me not to see,
Hearing shall keep me near to thee instead."
I then began:—"Enveloped in that frame
Which death dissolves, do I ascend on high:
And through the infernal gloom I hither came.
Since then hath God on me such grace bestowed,
As to behold His Courts with mortal eye,
In this most strange and unaccustomed mode,
Conceal not who you were before you died;
And if this path may reach the opening, tell:—
By your direction we our steps shall guide."

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19. The wrathful record the humility of our Saviour.

"I was a Lombard; Marco was my name;
I knew the world, and loved that virtue well
To which no mortal now directs his aim.
To mount above thou takest the proper way;
And when thou there arrivest, let me crave
That thou forget not for my soul to pray."
Then I: "As far as promises can bind,
I will obey thee: but one doubt I have,
That, unexplained, is bursting in my mind.
Single before, that doubt is now made twain
By thy opinion, rendering me more sure,
When coupled with what elsewhere I obtain.
Lost is the world, e'en as thou sayest, indeed
To every virtue; and is so impure,
That evil there on every side doth breed.
But what the cause I do entreat thee show,
That I may understand and tell to other;
For one, in heaven, one places it below."
A sigh profound he drew, by grief intense
Forced into "Oh:"—he then began: "O brother!
The world is blind, and sure thou comest thence.
Ye mortals to the heavenly orbs each cause
Ascribe; as though a first necessity
Moved all things in obedience to its laws:
Which (were it true) in you it would destroy
Free-will: and then unjustly should we see
Woe dealt to evil deeds, to virtue joy.
Your movements have their impulse first from heaven;
I say not all; but had I so asserted,
To choose 'twixt good and evil, light is given,
And freedom of the will; which in the first
Encounter with the stars, stands, if exerted;
Then conquers all if it be duly nurst.

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46. Marco Lombardo was a Venetian of great influence, worth and liberality. 55. *i. e.* As to the cause of the degeneracy of the world which Marco had spoken of, and Guido del Duca had before dilated upon. Canto xiv. 99. That cause he presently entreats Marco to tell. Line 61. 67. The cause of the wickedness of the world. Line 61. 73. *i. e.* Supposing the stars to possess a certain influence, it is not necessarily predominant, but may be overcome by man, if he exercises that free-will with which he is endowed. See canto xviii. 72. That Dante believed altogether in the influence of the stars seems doubtful from canto xx. 13; though he here speaks according to popular belief.

Though free, yet are ye subject to the sway 79
Of higher power, that in you plants the mind,
Which cares not starry influence to obey.
If in the paths of error then ye rove,
The cause is in yourselves, as ye will find;
And this more clearly I to thee will prove.—
Forth from His hand, who, ere it see the day, 85
Views it delighted,—like some infant child,
Weeping and smiling in its sportive way,
The artless soul springs forth—not knowing aught
Except to turn to joy, whence it is thrilled
Spontaneous, by its gladsome Maker taught.
Some trifling good, first tasted with delight, 91
Leads it astray, and tempts it to pursue,
Unless restrained or guided on aright.
Laws needful hence, a bridle to impose—
A ruler hence—who of the city true
The towers at least may from afar disclose.
Laws are there;—but who keeps the laws in view? 97
For know,—the Shepherd who the flock doth lead
Parts not the hoof, although the cud he chew.
And hence it is, the tribe who see their guide
Aim at the good they value most, do feed
On that alone, nor care for aught beside.
Ill guidance, as ye plainly may descry, 103
Hath led the world in wicked paths astray;
And not your nature's bad propensity.
To Rome, which taught the ancient world good deeds,
Two suns were wont to point the twofold way,
That of the world, and that to God which leads.
The one hath quenched the other,—with the crook 109
The sword is joined; and scarce it need be told

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85. This is the Platonic idea of the Creator having the model of all things in his mind before they were created. 95. The "true city" points to the prophetical Zion of the Scriptures, whose future site Dante supposes will be on the summit of the mountain of Purgatory. 98. "He compares the Pope, on account of the union of the temporal with the spiritual power in his person, to an unclean beast in the Levitical law." Cary. 100. "The tribe," "la gente," generally interpreted to mean the common people, evidently refers to the clergy. See canto vi. 91, and note. 107. *i. e.* The Emperor and the Bishop of Rome, one possessing the temporal, the other the spiritual power. Dante declares the union of the two to be the cause of the degeneracy of Italy.

How ill the twain such combination brook,
Since one no longer doth the other curb.
Look to the grain, if credit thou withhold;
For by its fruit is known each several herb.
The country washed by Adice and Po
For courtesy and valour once was famed,
Ere Frederick had sustained his overthrow.
Securely there may pass each villain now,
Who dared not then have shown his face, ashamed
To talk with good men and confront their brow.
Still live there three, in whom the olden time
Reproves the vices of these latter days;
And much they wish to reach a happier clime—
Currado da Palazzo, good Gheràrd,
And da Castel, who, in the Frenchman's phrase,
Is called more properly the plain Lombard.
Know then, Rome's Church, oppressed by too much weight,
Confounding the two governments, hath brought
Herself into the mire with all her freight."
"Marco," I said, "thy argument is good;
Now know I why from the heritage 'twas thought
Better the sons of Levi to exclude.
But who is that Gheràrd, who, as you said,
Reproves a vicious age, and seems to be
Left as a sample of the mighty dead?"
"To dupe or try me is thy speech preferred,
Since, Tuscan though it is," he answered me,
"Of good Gheràrd thou seem'st not to have heard.
Him by no other surname do I know,
Unless his daughter Gaia one prepare.

---

117. Frederick II. 124. Currado was a gentleman of Brescia—Gherardo of Trevigi, surnamed "The good." Speaking of him in his Convito, Dante says: "Supposing his birth to have been the lowest possible, who will dare to say that Gherardo was a mean man; and who will not agree with me in calling him noble?" Tract. iv. 14. 125. Guido da Castello was a virtuous and hospitable citizen of Reggio; of such simplicity that he obtained the name of "the plain Lombard,"—according to the French custom of calling all Italians Lombards. 131. *i. e.* That not interfering with worldly concerns they might better attend to the duties of their sacerdotal office. 136. *i. e* "I cannot doubt but you have heard of Gherard, though you pretend not." In naming him, (line 125) Marco had not mentioned his residence, as he had Currado's. 140. The only other title he condescends to give, is, that

God speed you, for no more with you I go.
Piercing the mist—behold the morning ray
Already whitens: I must leave thee, ere
The Angel who is yonder, comes this way."
He spake; nor further question would he hear.

CANTO XVII.

ARGUMENT.

Dante emerges from the dense mist of Anger described in the last canto. Address to Fancy. Examples of Anger. (Philomela. Haman. Amata.) An Angel invites the Poets upward to the fourth circle, where lukewarmness in love towards God is punished.

REMEMBER, reader, if thou e'er hast been
Wrapt in dark mist upon an Alpine height,
Through which, but as a mole doth through his skin,
Thine eye could pierce—how, when the thick moist shroud
Begins to melt away, the solar light
Feebly and faintly penetrates the cloud;
And swift will thy imagination be
To form a just conception, how the sun,
Which now was setting, first appeared to me,
As, keeping even with my faithful guide,
Forth from such murky cloud my way I won
To the low shores whereon the rays had died.
O Fancy, in whose chain we oft are bound—
So lost to outward things we take no thought,
Although a thousand trumpets clang around;
What moves thee, if no impulse sense bestow?
Light moves thee, in the clime of heaven self-wrought,
Or by his will who sendeth it below.
Imagination painted to my sight
Her crime who was transformed into the bird
Excelling all that in the song delight:
And so abstracted was my mind within,
That from without was nothing seen or heard,
Which had the power acceptance there to win.

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of "the father of Gaia," a lady whose virtue and beauty were known throughout Italy.

20. The bird is Progne, wife of Tereus, and sister of Philomela. Dante follows those according to whom Progne was changed into a nightingale

Into my lofty fancy then was showered 25
One crucified, enraged and fierce to view,
Such as in death his savage soul he poured.
Round him the great Ahasuerus stood,
Esther his wife, and Mordecai the Jew,
In word and deed pre-eminently good.
And as this vision of my fancy burst, 31
Like to a bubble, which hath sudden been
Left by the water which composed it first,
Before my sight a youthful maid arose,
Profusely weeping, as she cried: "O queen,
Whence came the wrathful wish thy life to close?
To save Lavinia's life, hath death been thine; 37
Yet hast thou lost her; and for thee I weep,
Mourning thy fate more bitterly than mine."
As when a sudden and o'erpowering light
Strikes our closed eyes, and breaks upon our sleep,
Quivering a moment ere it takes its flight;—
So the imagined vision sank below, 43
Soon as a splendour burst upon mine eye
Surpassing all that on the earth we know.
I turned to view the place I now had gained,
When cried a voice: "Ye here may mount on high,"
Which from all other thoughts my mind restrained,
And with such eagerness inspired my breast 49
To look upon the person who thus spoke,
Nought less than actual sight had given me rest.
E'en as the sun our mortal ken weighs down,
Its very radiance to itself a cloak,
So here my visual power was overthrown.
"A heavenly spirit this, who up the height, 55
Unasked by us, would fain our journey speed,
Veiling his presence with excess of light.
He uses us as man himself would use;
For he who waits entreaty, seeing need,
Inclines his mind already to refuse.
Then let us not such invitation spurn, 61
But to the mount, ere it grow dark, repair;

26. Haman, prime minister of king Ahasuerus. 34. Lavinia—mourning for her mother Amata, who infuriated at the supposed death of Turnus, hanged herself. See Virgil, Æn. xii. 601.

We may not afterwards, till day return."
'Thus spake my faithful guide:—by him attended
I bent my course up to a lofty stair:
And ere the lowest step we had ascended,
I felt a wind upon my face, as though 67
Fanned by a pinion;—and these words were said;
"Blessed are they who peace on earth bestow."
The sun's last rays that usher in the night,
Were now upraised so high above my head,
That stars on every side appeared in sight.
"Why, O my virtue," to myself I said, 73
When I perceived my limbs could not command
Their former strength,—"why art thou vanquished?"
Arriving at a landing, whence no more
The staircase led above, we took our stand,
Like to a ship when she hath come ashore.
Some little time attentively I tried 79
In this new circle to distinguish sound;
Then to the master turned again and cried:
"O my dear Father, tell what sinful blot
Receives ablution in the present round;
Though rest our feet,—thy speech, withhold it not."
And he to me: "The love of good, curtailed 85
Of its proportions, here obtains them full;
Here plies the oar that erst through loitering failed.
But to perceive more clearly what I say,
Direct thy thoughts to me; and thou shalt cull
Some fruit of goodly sort from our delay.—
Creator nor created being e'er 91
Was wholly void of love, my son," he said,
"Or natural love or mental, as is clear.
The natural love was aye from error free;
The other into error may be led,
Or through excess, or through deficiency.
To primal good while it directs its aim, 97
Or secondary, keeping measure due,
It cannot tend to aught deserving blame:
But when perverted or when too intent,

67. The Angel thus removes from Dante's forehead the mark designating the sin of anger. 69. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." St. Matthew v. 9.

Or slack, some goodly object to pursue,
'Gainst the Creator is the creature bent.
Hence it is clear that Love implants the seed
Of all the virtues that your bosoms sway,
And also of each unbecoming deed.
Now, from the safety of the object loved
Since Love can never turn its face away,
So from self hatred are all things removed.
And since no one in self-existent state
Lives, independent of his primal source,
It follows clearly none that source can hate.
This love of ill then, (if the truth I say)
Against its neighbour must direct its course,
And in three modes is gendered in your clay;
One by his neighbour's fall aspires to be
Exalted, and upon this sole account
He longs to see him sunk to low degree.—
Another is depressed through fear to lose
Power, grace, and honour, should a rival mount;
Whence grieving, he his neighbour's fall pursues.—
Another, roused by injury, longs to wreak
His fiery wrath, and vengeance to obtain;
And he must needs his neighbour's misery seek:
Beneath us is this triple love subdued.
Now of that other love some knowledge gain,
Which keeps no measure, though it aims at good.—
Some blessing indistinct is wished by each,
In which the soul a sweet repose may find;
Whence all essay their several good to reach:
If love too languid urges to pursue,
Or to obtain it,—to this round assigned,
After repentance, meet ye sufferings due.
Another good there is—not cause of bliss—
Not full fruition,—not that essence true,
Of every good the source:—the love of this,
By mortal man too lavishly indulged,
The inmates of the higher circles rue:

114. Of this evil pleasure in the misfortune of others, Dante makes a triple division—pride, envy and anger. These three vices, which have been punished in the preceding rounds, are here severally described, lines 115, 118, 121.

How triply shared is not by me divulged—
The search of this thou mayst thyself pursue." 139

CANTO XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

Virgil continuing his discourse concerning love, explains its origin. Free-will. Spirits rush by in great eagerness to ascend, recording as they pass instances of zeal and affection. Others follow, suffering for their lukewarmness, and recording instances of their crime. Dante falls asleep.

His reasoning ended, my exalted guide 1
Attentively surveyed my countenance,
To see if I were fully satisfied.
And I, by further cravings now possest,
Spake not aloud, but said within: "Perchance
He by my constant questions is opprest."
But that true father, who at once perceived 7
The timid wish I had not dared to tell,
Soon by his speech my fear to speak relieved.
Then I: "My sight, O master, gains such force
In thy clear rays, that I discern full well
All that is meant and taught in thy discourse.
Wherefore, sweet Father dear, I pray thee show 13
That love, whence every action fraught with shame,
And all good deeds, as thou hast told me, flow!"
"Direct the sharpened lustres of thy mind
To me," he said, "while I their fault proclaim,
Who think, though blind themselves, to lead the blind.
The soul, which is created prone to love, 19
Awakened into action by delight,
To all that pleases doth obedient move.
Your apprehension from some object true
An image draws, unfolding it to sight,
So that the soul is tempted to pursue.
And if the mind thus wrought on, is inclined,— 25
That inclination is a natural love,
Newly produced by pleasure in your mind.
Thus, e'en as fire spontaneous mounts on high,
Created apt to raise itself above,

14. In reference to the last canto, line 104. 17. "Their error" means the error of those who declare "love of every kind to be praiseworthy." See line 36.

And reach again its storehouse in the sky;
The soul, so smitten, enters on desire— 31
A spiritual motion, resting never
Till the beloved object it acquire.
Now will appear to thee how far they err
From truth, who love of every kind whatever,
As in itself deserving praise, aver.
Love may itself perhaps be understood 37
As always good; but still we sometimes find
The impression bad, although the wax be good."
I answered: "Love to me is rendered plain
By thy discourse, and my attentive mind;
But this hath filled me with my doubts again.
For, if from outward objects love gains force, 43
And such sole force to sway the mind avails,
No merit has it, right or wrong its course."
"As far as Reason," he replied, "can reach,
I may direct thee; but when Reason fails
'Tis Faith that works, and Beatrice must teach.
Each spiritual essence, that is joined 49
With matter that in separate state exists,
Contains within the virtue of its kind;
Which, if it worketh not, remains unseen,
Save in the effect: as in a plant subsists
Life, not perceived but by the foliage green,—
So, from what source the apprehension springs 55
Of first ideas, vainly men inquire,
Or whence comes passion for the first loved things.
They live in man, as instinct in the bee
For making honey; and this first desire
Nor praise nor censure can infer to thee.
That every other wish round this may bend, 61
In you is placed a power, whose warning voice
Should still the threshold of the will defend.
This is the source, whence praise or blame accrues,
As good or bad affections are your choice—
Winnowed by each, who this or that pursues.

33. "Every thing mainly desires its own perfection, and in that its every desire finds repose . . . And this is that desire which ever makes all our gratifications imperfect; since no gratifications in this life are so great that they can take away the thirst, and remove the aforesaid desire." Dante, Convito, Trat. iii. 6.

Those who the matter fully sifted, knew
  This innate liberty, and felt its force;
  Whence moral codes for after times they drew.
Hence lay we down, that from necessity
  Each love that in you springs derives its source;
  But in yourselves the powers to check it lie.
Free-will is termed 'the noble faculty'
  By Beatrice;—remember then to bear
  This, if she speak of it, in memory."
The moon, that tardily at midnight came,
  Was making now the stars appear more rare,
  In figure like a bucket all in flame—
Stemming the heaven abandoned by the sun,
  Between the Corsic and Sardinian coast,
  When Rome beholds him as his course is run:—
And that kind shade who hath more fame bestowed
  On Pictola than Mantua e'er could boast,
  Had eased my mind of its oppressive load;
When I (whose doubts had all been set at rest
  By reason clear and argument refined)
  Stood like to one by drowsiness opprest.
But vanished soon this drowsiness; for now
  Came suddenly, approaching from behind,
  A troop of spirits o'er the mountain's brow:
And like the fury and the crowd displayed
  Ismenus and Asopus' banks beside,
  Whene'er the Thebans called for Bacchus' aid;
So each, throughout this round, as I beheld,
  Urging his hurried footstep, onward hied,—
  By goodly zeal and righteous love impelled.

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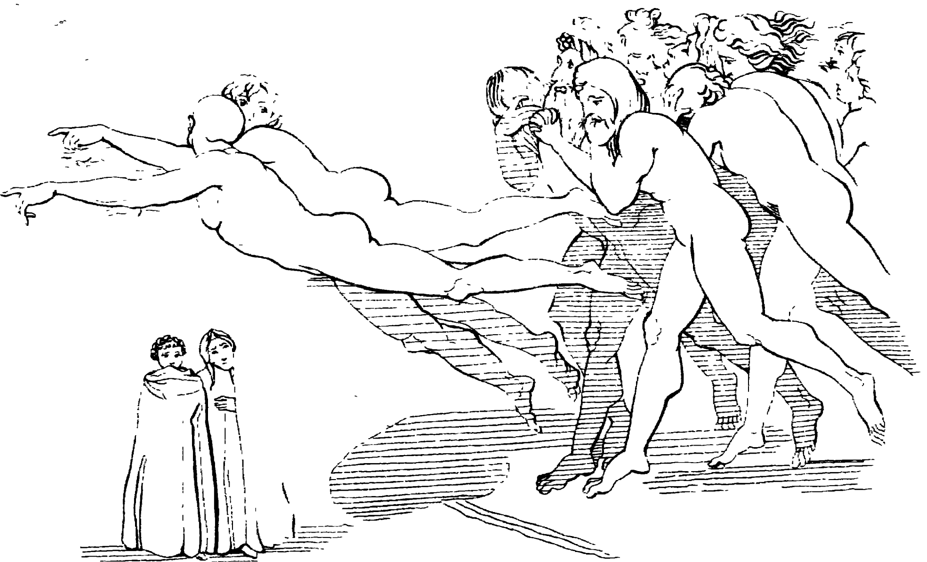
73. "The best state of man is that in which he is most free .... and the foundation of our liberty is liberty of the will." Dante, De Mon. i. 36. 74. This hint is in reference to Paradiso, v. 19. 76. The moon passed with a motion opposite to that of the heavens, through the constellation of the Scorpion, in which the sun is; when to those who are in Rome he appears to set between the isles of Corsica and Sardinia. 83. Pietola, formerly called Andes, a village near Mantua, was the spot where Virgil was born; and therefore more to be celebrated than Mantua itself. 84. The "load," is to be understood of Dante's questions, to which Virgil had given a satisfactory solution. 91. Statius relates that the Thebans used to invoke Bacchus by night, proceeding in great numbers to the banks of the rivers Ismenus and Asopus, where with lighted torches and loud cries they called the deity by his various titles.

They reach'd us soon—so rapidly they swept; 97
(For none amid that crowd immense was slack)
And two in front cried, shouting as they wept;—
"The Virgin sought the hills without delay;
And Cæsar, hastening into Spain, to attack
Ilerda, smote Marseilles upon his way."
"Haste, haste," the others cried who near them stood, 103
"Through want of love be time not thrown away;
Grace springs anew from ardour to do good."
"O ye in whom a fervour, now acute,
Doth haply compensate for old delay,
Which to lukewarmness owed its primal root;
This man who lives (no idle tale I feign) 109
Would with the rising sun ascend the steep;
Then say where nearest he the stair may gain."
These words were spoken by my faithful guide;
When, "Close behind us now the pathway keep,
And thou shalt find the entrance," one replied,
"So anxious to pursue our course are we, 115
We cannot pause;—forgiveness then we pray,
If this our duty rudeness seem to be.
San Zeno's Abbot in Verona I,
What time good Barbarossa's arm held sway,
Whom Milan speaks of yet lamentingly.
He with one foot already in the grave 121
Shall for that monastery shortly mourn,
And for the abuse of power forgiveness crave;
Since he, for Shepherd of the flock proclaimed
His son, in mind defective, and ill born,
Nor less in person than in temper maimed."

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100. "And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill-country with haste into a city of Judah; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth." St. Luke i. 39. These examples of dispatch are recited to spur on the lazy and lukewarm. 101. Julius Cæsar, quitting Rome, went to Marseilles; whence, leaving Brutus with a part of his army to besiege that city, he proceeded with great expedition into Spain, and defeated Pompey's generals at Ilerda, now Lerida. 103. "All our misfortunes, if we come properly to examine their origin, arise from our not understanding the use of time." Dante, Convito. 118. Alberto was a natural son of Alberto della Scala, Lord of Verona—who, though deformed in body and mind, was by his father forcibly made Abbot of San Zeno, a monastery of Verona, in the time of Frederick Barbarossa, ironically called "good."

REDEEMING LOST TIME.



O YE IN WHOM A FERVOUR NOW ACUTE
DOTH HAPLY COMPENSATE FOR OLD DELAY Purg. XVIII 106

Whether he added more, or here refrained, 127
I know not—he so rapidly had passed;
But this I heard, and with delight retained.
And he in every need who gave me aid,
Said: "Turn, and on those two thine eyesight cast,
Whose sharp reproaches indolence upbraid."
This cry in rear of all the rest was their's: 133
"They, unto whom the Red Sea opened, died
Ere Jordan's stream beheld his destined heirs.
They too, who would not share Æneas' woes,
And by his fortunes faithfully abide,
A life inglorious for their portion chose."
When now these shades had passed so far away 139
That not a trace remained;—new thought, I deem,
Within me sprang, and suddenly bore sway,
Whence other thoughts of different kind arose;
And I so wandered on from theme to theme,
Mine eyes at last in rapture lost I close,
And change my meditation for a dream. 145

CANTO XIX.

ARGUMENT.

Dante sees a vision, in which Falsehood and Truth appear to him in the form of two Ladies. He proceeds to the fifth circle, where he meets with Pope Adrian the fifth, purging the sin of Avarice.

It was the hour when now the heat of day 1
Can warm the coldness of the moon no more—
By Earth or Saturn quenched the solar ray;
And when the Geomancers, ere the dawn,
Their Greater Fortune in the East explore,
Ascending whence night's shades are first withdrawn:
That in a dream there stood before my sight 7
A female, stammering, and with squinting eyes,
Maimed hands, distorted legs, and deadly white.

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134. All died, with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, before they reached the river Jordan, as a punishment for their lukewarmness and disobedience. 138. A part of the Trojans who accompanied Æneas, fatigued with their long voyage, chose rather to remain with Acestes in Sicily, than follow their leader into Italy. See Æn. v. 718.

1. The hour of dawn. 5. Geomancers, when they divined, formed figures, named after certain stars. To one of these they gave the name of "Fortuna Major." 8. Falsehood.

I gazed on her; and as to members chilled
By night, the sun a genial warmth supplies;
E'en so my look her soul with comfort filled:
And sudden she arose, again endued 13
With power of speech: her face late pale and wan,
With love's own colour quickly was renewed:
And when the use of words she had regained,
To sing in such sweet accents she began,
Mine ears from listening scarce had been restrained:
And thus she sang: "That Syren sweet am I 19
Who charm the wandering sailor on the sea,
Lulling her hearers into ecstasy.
Ulysses from his course I drew astray,
Enamoured with my song;—who lists to me
But seldom parts—so absolute my sway."
Scarcely her speech was ended, when a dame 25
Of staid and holy mien I saw appear,
Anxious to put the former one to shame.
"O Virgil, Virgil, who is this?" she said
In tone indignant:—then approached he near,
His eyes fixed wholly on that virtuous maid.
She seized the other, nor delayed to unclose 31
Her vests in front, and showed her stomach, whence
Came that which woke me—such a fume arose.
I turned mine eyes; and Virgil said: "Take heed;—
Thrice have I called thee;—rise, and let us hence;
And to the outlet from this round proceed."
Now throughout all the sacred mountain were 37
The circles filled with light; and as we went,
The youthful sun was shining in our rear.
Following his steps, I wore an anxious brow,
Charged with a heavy weight of thought, and bent
Like to the one half of a bridge; when now
A voice cried: "Come, the entrance is at hand," 43
In accent so benign and passing sweet
As ne'er was heard in this our mortal land
With wings expanded, like a swan's to sight,

15. *i. e.* That specious hue which worldly objects assume, so as to deceive even those who are most on their guard. 22. This is contrary to Homer's account, and probably according to some legend. 25. Truth. 31. See Fairy Queen, b. i. c. viii, st. 46.

He who had spoken, upward led our feet
Betwixt the walls of flint that fenced the height.
His pinions then he moved, and fanned us, saying:
"Blessed are they that mourn;—their souls, renewed,
Shall be consoled."—"What is it thou art weighing,
That earth engages thy regard alone?"
While, somewhat raised above, the angel stood,
My guide exclaimed to me in anxious tone.
"An object newly seen hath in me wrought
This change," I answered, "and enthrals me so,
I have not power to drive it from my thought."
"Hast thou beheld," he said, "that sorceress old,
To those above us now sole cause of woe?
Hast seen how man may loose him from her hold?
Spurn then the earthly coils that round thee cling,
And to the lure above direct thine eyes,
Whirled with the spheres by heaven's eternal King."
And, as a falcon, which first scans its feet,
Then turns him to the call, and forward flies,
In eagerness to snatch the tempting meat;
E'en so did I: and where appeared a way
Carved in the rock, I climbed the steep ascent,
Till in my view the winding cornice lay.
In the fifth circle fully launched, I found
A multitude indulging loud lament,
Lying on earth, their faces to the ground.
"My soul hath cleavëd to the dust," I heard,
In accents mingled with such deep drawn sighs,
That I could scarcely comprehend a word.
"O ye elect of God, to soothe whose woes
Doth comfort both from hope and justice rise,
Be pleased the lofty staircase to disclose."
"If ye approach, exempt from fear to share
Our penalty, and haste the road to find,—
See that your right hand from the mount ye bear."
This answer to the poet's speech I heard
From one advanced before us, and divined
The point in which their apprehension erred;

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62. The "lure," properly a falconer's term, means here the heavenly bodies. 71. The avaricious are appropriately punished for having devoted all their thoughts to earthly pursuits. 73. Psalm cxix. 25. 84. They were ignorant that Dante was alive.

And bent my eyes on those of my dear lord, 85
Who to the strong desire that mine expressed
Rendered with joyful look a kind accord.
When I was free of mine own will to act,
My footsteps to that creature I addressed,
Whose words so lately did my thoughts attract;
And said: "O spirit, in whom grief matures 91
That which you need, to turn to God again,
Suspend for me that greater care of yours.
Say who you were, and wherefore 'tis your doom
To hold your backs aloft.—Can I obtain
Aught for you there, whence I alive am come?"
And he to me: "'Tis meet I tell thee why 97
Heaven upward turns our backs; but first be told,
Successor of the great St. Peter I.
Between Siestri and Chiaveri flows
A beauteous river, from whose name of old
The title of my family arose.
Soon had I proof how great the mantle's weight 103
To him who fain would keep it from the mire;
All burdens else seem but as feathers.—Late,
Full late, alas! to me conversion came;
But when I was ordained Rome's mighty Sire,
I saw how false was every earthly aim.
I saw that there the heart could find no rest; 109
No higher objects in that life were given;
Whence love of this was kindled in my breast.
Till then, my life in misery had been passed,
Coveting all things, and estranged from Heaven;—
Now into penal suffering am I cast.
The effect of avarice may here be seen, 115
Which down to earth hath all the spirits bent;
Nor doth the mount exhibit pangs more keen:
For as our eyes delighted not to rear
Their gaze aloft, on earthly things intent,
So now to earth hath Justice bound them here.
As Avarice erst extinguished all our love, 121
(Whence he that worketh worketh but in vain)

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92. Repentance. 99. Pope Adrian V. of the family of Fieschi.—He died in 1276, having enjoyed the dignity little more than a month. 101. The Lavagno, in the Genoese territory.

So Justice here, without the power to move
Hath bound us hand and foot; and till it please
Heaven's righteous Sire, so long shall we remain
Stretched out immoveable, and ill at ease."
I bowed me in respect, and would have spoken; 127
But soon as I began, he, hearing me,
Knew by my voice the reverential token,
And said: "What is it makes thee bend so low?"
Then I: "This tribute to thy dignity,
Conscience, that true director, bade me show."
"Arise, O brother, from thy knees," he said; 133
"Be not deceived—a fellow servant I;
And to one Master is our homage paid.
If e'er that sacred evangelic sound
Was heard of thee: 'They marry not on high,'
The meaning of my words may well be found.
Now go—I would not have thee tarry more; 139
For thy delay my weeping doth prevent,
Which ripens that whereof thou spak'st before.
Allied to me, on earth one dwelleth yet,
My niece Alagia—pure and innocent,
Unless our house a bad example set;
And she alone my race doth represent."

CANTO XX.

ARGUMENT.

Examples of poverty, liberality, and avarice. Hugh Capet gives a history of his family. All the spirits join in singing "Glory to God in the highest."—Dante is anxious to know the cause of the mountain's shaking.

In vain strives will with mightier will contending; 1
Wherefore I drew the sponge unsatisfied

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134. Out of respect to the dignity of the Pope, Dante had fallen on his knees; when Adrian, aware of it, bids him arise, alluding to Rev. xxii. 9. —"See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow servant.... worship God." 137. "For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the Angels of God in heaven." Matt. xxii. 30. Thus, says Adrian, the ties are dissolved by which I was married to the church. 143. Dante having offered his services (line 96), Adrian requests that he would bear tidings of him to his only remaining relation, daughter of the Count of Fièschi, and wife of Morello Malespina.

1. Pope Adrian V. having signified to Dante, at the conclusion of the

From out the water, to his pleasure bending.
Along the rock my upward course I wind,
Treading the vacant places with my guide,
As on a wall by battlements confined:
For they who drop by drop pour through the eye 7
That ill by which the world is all possest,
Close to the wall's exterior margin lie.
Curst be thou, ancient Wolf—thy greediness
Surpassing that of every other beast;—
Thy hunger so profound—so fathomless!
O heaven! by whose revolving orbs, as some 13
Have deemed, all changes are produced below,
When will the Victor to destroy her come?
With rare and tardy steps we onward went,
Observant of the shades, who, plunged in woe,
Poured forth their grief in wailing and lament;
When in advance a plaintive note arose, 19
"O blessed Mary!"—on mine ear it fell,
Like to a woman's cries in child-bed throes.
And, "Oh, how poor," it added, "was thy plight,
That lowly dwelling doth attest full well,
Where thou thy holy burden gavest to light!
O good Fabricius," then pursued the voice, 25
"Virtue accompanied with poverty,
Rather than vicious grandeur was thy choice."
With such delight these accents thrilled my frame,
That I advanced, if haply I might see
The courteous spirit from whose lips they came.
The voice went on those bounteous gifts to praise 31
Which Nicholas unto the virgins made,
That honour might attend their youthful days.
"O spirit, tell, I pray thee, what thy name,
Who speakest of such good;" and "why," I said,
"Dost thou alone these worthy themes proclaim?

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last canto, his unwillingness to prolong his conversation with him, the poet is obliged to give way, though anxious to obtain further information. In this state of dissatisfaction he likens himself to a thirsty sponge. 8. Avarice. 10. The She-Wolf of the Inferno (i. 49)—*i. e.* the avaricious Court of Rome. 15. Can Grande della Scala, of whom see Inf. i. 101. 32. A father, about to prostitute his three daughters, through excess of poverty, was relieved by the liberality of San Nicholas, who gave each a marriage portion.

Not unrequited shall be thy reply, 37
If I return to close the short lived race
Of human life, which to its end draws nigh."
"Not in the hope of comfort thence," said he,
"Will I inform thee; but because such grace,
Ere thou art dead, is manifest in thee.
Of that ill favoured plant was I the root, 43
Which so o'ershadowed all the Christian land
That rarely thence is gathered wholesome fruit.
Were power to Douay, Ghent, Lille, Bruges given,
Revenge would soon arrive; and at His hand
I ask revenge, whose dwelling is in heaven.
Hugh Capet was the name I had on earth: 49
The Philips and the Louis', who bore sway
In France of late, from me derive their birth:
My sire at Paris plied the butcher's trade.
When all the ancient kings had passed away,
Save only one in sable weeds arrayed,
I found the imperial reins within my hands: 55
From new possessions such great power I won,
And friends flocked round me in such numerous bands,
That in due course of time the widowed crown
Was placed upon the forehead of my son,
From whom the consecrated bones come down.
Till the great dower of Provence took away 61
Reproach of birth, a limited command
My offspring had,—then virtuous: from that day
Commenced with violence and many a lie
Its rapine;—for amends it then laid hand
On Normandy, Poitou, and Gascony.

40. *i. e.* "You need not mention me to my posterity on your return to earth. I can hope nothing from their prayers: they are all too wicked." 43. "I was the first," says Hugh Capet, "of the dynasty now ruling over France, whence so many bad kings have sprung." 46. These cities had been seized through fraud or force in 1299, by Philip the Fair. See canto vii. 109. 48. The French were driven out by the Flemings in 1302. 49. A whole history of the Capets, comprehending a period of 317 years, is contained in fifty lines. 53. *i. e.* When the posterity of Charlemagne and the second race of French Monarchs had failed, except Charles Lorraine, or according to Biagioli, Charles the Simple. 61. Louis IX. and his brother, Charles of Anjou, married two of the four daughters of Raymond Berenger. See Par. vi. 134.

Charles entered Italy, and, for amends, 67
A victim of the young Conraddin made,
And sent to heaven Aquinas, for amends.
I see from France, ere many years have flown,
Another Charles Italia's peace invade,
Thereby to make his race more fully known.
Unarmed he goes, save with that lance alone 73
Which Judas tilted with; and this he bears
So, that e'en now is Florence overthrown.
Land shall he reap not; but of shame and guilt
The heavier load, as, light the heart he wears,
While blood around him is profusely spilt.
I see the other, captured on the waves, 79
And, just let loose, his bargained daughter sell,
E'en as the corsairs do their common slaves.
O Avarice! what canst thou more effect
Than draw my lineage to thee by such spell,
Its very blood it ceases to respect?
That past and future ill may seem less dread— 85
Entering Alagna, lo the fleur-de-lis,
And in his Vicar Christ a captive led!
I see him mocked a second time;—again
The vinegar and gall produced I see;
And Christ himself 'twixt living robbers slain.
I see the modern Pilate, whom avails 91

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67. Charles of Anjou. See note canto iii. 107. 68. Conraddin was the last prince of the house of Suabia, and the rightful head of the Neapolitan crown, cruelly and unjustly put to death by Charles of Anjou. See Robertson, Charles V., sec. iii. Charles is said to make amends (69) for one crime by committing another. 69. Thomas Aquinas is ironically said to be sent to heaven by Charles, at whose instigation he was poisoned for denouncing his iniquitous government. 71. Charles of Valois. See Memoir of Dante. 73. *i. e.* His arms were those of the traitor Judas. 76. He justly obtained the name of Lackland, as a punishment for his offences. 79. Carlo Novello, king of Sicily and Apulia, son of Charles of Anjou, captured in an engagement with the fleet of Peter, king of Arragon. He sold his daughter Beatrice to Azzo da Este, for thirty thousand florins. 86. *i. e.* "In order to eclipse all crimes, past and to come, behold the fleur-de-lis (the arms of France) entering Alagna, by order of Philip the Fair, for the purpose of seizing Pope Boniface VIII." 87. Dante shows his respect for the church, and laments the insults offered to it, though in the person of his greatest enemy. Soon after the seizure, Boniface died of rage and grief. See Villani, viii. 63. 91. Philip le Bel is termed "the modern Pilate," for his cruelty and treachery.

No cruelty to sate, and who, unbidden,
Into the temple sets his greedy sails.
O thou, my lord! when shall I joyfully
Behold the vengeance, which, profoundly hidden,
Makes sweet thine anger in thy mystery?
She whom I praised—the Holy Spirit's spouse, 97
When thou didst turn unto me with request
For comment, forms the subject of our vows
As long as day-light to the eye remains;
But soon as night around us throws her vest,
Then take we up instead far different strains.
Pygmalion's sordid avarice next we chide, 103
Whom greedy lust of all-engrossing gain
Changed to a robber, traitor, parricide.
Midas' dire sufferings then our thoughts engage,
Who compassed all that avarice would obtain—
A laughing stock to every future age.
Next doth each spirit Achan's guilt record, 109
Who stole the spoils, and seemeth still pursued
By Joshua's vengeance for the crime abhorred.
Sapphira and her guilty spouse we blame;
We laud the hoof that Heliodorus rued;
And all the mountain echoes with the name
Of Polymnestor, who killed Polydore: 115
And last of all, 'O Crassus,' is our cry,
'Tell, for thou knowest, how tastes the golden ore?'
Thus high or low we each our thoughts express;
And various feelings various notes supply,
With greater intonation or with less.
Not I alone recorded the high praise 121
Of those fair names here mentioned during day;
Another not so loud her voice did raise."

93. *i.e.* He converts the property of the Church to his own use. 97. In reference to the exclamation, "O blessed Mary," &c. lines 20, 22, &c. "Instances of liberality and humility," he says, "form the subject of our vows during the day; but during night, examples of avarice, such as Pygmalion," &c. 113. See 2 Maccabees iii. 25. 116. Marcus Crassus chose Parthia as his province, in the hopes of great plunder. The Parthians pretended to fly—deceived, and surrounded him; when, to avoid falling into the enemy's hands, he caused himself to be slain. Having found his body, they are said to have poured melted lead down his throat.

Already had we left that shade behind,
And with the utmost strength that in us lay
Were striving up the rugged steep to wind;
When felt I quake the mountain fearfully, 127
As though 't were falling; whence my blood ran cold,
Chilled, like the blood of one led forth to die.
Never with shock so fierce was Delos riven,
Ere yet her nest Latona laid, to enfold
Her double progeny, the eyes of heaven.
Anon, so loud a shout from every side 133
Was uttered, that my master, drawing near,
Exclaimed: "Fear not, while I thy footsteps guide."
All shouted: "Glory be to God on high,"
As from a spot adjoining I could hear,
To which with more distinctness came the cry.
Immoveable we stood, in doubt suspended, 139
Like to the shepherds who first heard this song,
Till ceased the trembling, and the strain had ended.
Our holy path we then pursued again,
Viewing the spirits as we went along,
Who each, stretched out, resumed his mournful strain.
Never did ignorance so fiercely stir 145
Desire of knowledge in my anxious breast,
(If on this point my memory doth not err)
As then seemed to possess me, wrapt in thought;
Nor dared I ask a question, such our haste;
Nor of myself could I distinguish aught:
Timid and thoughtful onward thus I pressed. 151

CANTO XXI.

ARGUMENT.

Statius explains to Dante the occasion of the mountain's shaking, viz. whenever any one prepares to quit Purgatory, and takes his flight to Paradise. Statius, forgetting Virgil was a shadow, endeavours to embrace him.

THE natural thirst which ne'er can be allayed, 1
Save by the water from that hallowed fount,

132. Delos was subject to tremblings, till Latona there brought forth her twin offspring, Apollo and Diana, whom, from their being identified with the sun and moon, Dante here calls "the eyes of heaven."





VIEWING THE SPIRITS AS WE WENT ALONG
WHO EACH STRETCHED OUT RESUMED HIS MOURNFUL STRAIN

For which the woman of Samaria prayed,
Tormented me; while o'er the obstructed way
Behind my guide I hastened up the mount,
Sorrowing for those who their just penance pay.
And lo, as in his Gospel writes St. Luke,
That Christ appeared to two upon the road,
When He, uprisen, the hollow tomb forsook,
So in our rear anon appeared a shade,
Who on the prostrate crowd a look bestowed,
And presently this salutation made:
"May God, my brethren, grant you holy rest."
We sudden turned; and Virgil instantly
Him in like words of courtesy addressed:
"Peace in the assembly of the blest be thine,
By that impartial Court assigned to thee
Which bids eternal banishment be mine."
"How may this be?" noting our haste, he cried;
"If ye indeed are shades by God unblest,
Who up the stairs of heaven hath been your guide?"
My master then: "The marks observe again,
Which on his brow the Angel hath impressed:
They show him destined with the good to reign.
But because she who spinneth night and day
Not yet for him had drawn the distaff through,
That Clotho threads for all of mortal clay,
His soul, that sister is to thee and me,
Could not alone its upward course pursue,
Since not like our's his faculty to see.
Hence was I summoned from the throat of Hell
To lead his steps; and I will be his guide
Far as my knowledge may avail:—but tell
Wherefore the mountain lately shook, and why
E'en to its humid feet on every side
The souls sent forth that universal cry?"
Asking this question, Virgil brought me aid,
And passed the thread so justly through the eye

10. The poet Statius;—see line 91, when he first becomes known to Virgil. He appeared to Dante as suddenly as our Saviour to the two disciples going to Emmaus.—(St. Luke xxiv. 15.) 25. Lachesis, sister to Clotho and Atropos.

Of my desire, that hope my thirst allayed.
"So holy is this mountain," he commenced,
"That by no strange irregularity
Or want of order is it influenced.
Here changes come not, save from what in grace
Heaven to itself hence chooses to receive;
From nought beside vicissitude takes place.
Therefore nor falleth rain, nor snow, nor hail,
Neither hoar frost, nor dew at morn or eve,
Higher than yon three steps of easy scale.
No clouds, or dense or subtile, here are ranging,
No lightning seen, nor Thaumas' daughter fair,—
Often to mortal eyes her station changing:
Nor ever here doth vapour, dry with heat,
Ascend beyond the three first stages, where
The Vicar of St. Peter rests his feet.
Haply the mountain trembles more below;
But here, whatever winds in earth are pent,
(I know not why) it never trembleth so,
Save when some spirit, feeling purified,
Springs upward or moves on for its ascent,
By such a general shout accompanied.
Seized with a wish to be entirely free,
And change its former dwelling place, the mind
Proves by this very will its purity.
Good was its aim before; but lust held sway:
Now that same will which once to sin inclined
A willing tribute doth to Justice pay:
And I, who full five hundred years have lain
Thus grieving, felt but lately in my breast
Free wish a better dwelling to attain.
Hence didst thou feel the shock, and hear the praise
Throughout the mountain to the Lord addressed;
And may He soon those pious spirits raise."
Thus spoke he:—and as men by drinking share

43. *i. e.* Except on the occasion of a purified spirit taking its departure to Paradise. See canto xxviii. 101. 44. See Lombardi and Biagioli. 46. See Lucretius, iii. 18. 54. The gate of Purgatory—canto ix. 104. 65. The reading adopted is "tal voglia." The same earthly disposition to look downward, which caused their sins, is suffered to continue awhile as their punishment

Pleasure proportioned to the thirst it slakes,
My full content no language could declare.
My leader now: "I see how ye are bound,
How the net opens, why the mountain shakes,
And why such cries of mutual joy resound.
But who thou wert, oh! grant that I may know;
And wherefore it hath been thy destiny
Here to remain so many ages, show."
"What time the Roman Titus, named the good,
Avenged the wounds, with aid of the most High,
Whence gushed, by Judas sold, the guiltless blood,
That name most honoured and enduring most,"
The spirit made reply, "was mine on earth;
By faith unblest, renown I yet could boast.
So sweet the vocal spirit that I breathed,
Rome drew me from the country of my birth,
And round my brows the well earned myrtle wreathed.
The name of Statius still on earth I bear;
I sang of Thebes, then of Achilles' fame,
But lived not to complete my second care.
The sparks by which my genius was inspired
Were emanations from that heavenly flame
Whereby above a thousand have been fired;—
I mean the Æneid—that fond nurse who fed
My soul with poetry, and rapture pure,
Waving the wreath of glory round my head:
And to have lived while Virgil breathed the air,—
I would a year of banishment endure
Added to that I now am doomed to bear."
These words made Virgil turn to where I stood,
With look that silent said: "Be silent thou;"
But Virtue cannot all that Virtue would:
For in the wake of passion, smile and tear
So closely follow, that they least allow
The will to govern in the most sincere.
I smiled, as one who winks;—whereat the shade
Refrained from words, and fastened on mine eye,

76. To satisfy divine justice. 82. Statius says he won his fame in the same year that Titus destroyed Jerusalem. 88. "Tanta dulcedine captos afficit ille animos," says Juvenal, speaking in praise of Statius.—Sat. vii. 84. 104. Dante spoke not, but could not avoid a smile at the praise Statius had unknowingly lavished upon Virgil in his presence.

In which most clearly is the soul pourtrayed.
"And may success reward thy toil," he said,
"As thou inform me, from thy features why
The lightning of a smile so lately sped."
"On either side now am I pressed amain;
One bids me speak, the other bids me not;
Whereat I sigh, nor do I sigh in vain."
"Speak," said the master; "let not fear repress
Thy utterance, but speak; and tell him what
He longs to know with so much eagerness."
Then I: "Thou haply wonderest, ancient sprite,
To see the smile that o'er my features came;
But greater wonder I would fain excite.—
He who conducts aloft my eager ken
Is that same Virgil, by whose ardent flame
Thou wert inspired to sing of gods and men.
To other cause if thou assign my smile,
Abandon it as false; nor deem it other
Than those same words thou spak'st of him erewhile."
To embrace my teacher's feet he now essayed,
Low bending down; but he: "Desist, O brother;
A shade art thou—I also am a shade."
He rising then: "See now how brightly beaming
Towards thee the fire of my affection springs,
When I forget our airy essence, deeming
Of empty shadows as substantial things."

CANTO XXII.

ARGUMENT.

Virgil, Statius, and Dante ascend up to the sixth circle, where the vice of Greediness is punished. Statius attributes his conversion to Christianity, as well as his taste for poetry to Virgil. They come to the tree of knowledge.—Voices are heard recording instances of temperance.

THE Angel having razed another scar
From off my brow, and shown me the access
To the sixth round, was left behind us far;
And "Blessed" had those holy shades repeated
Who rule their appetites by righteousness;

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4. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Matt. v. 6.

And with "I thirst" their welcome had completed:
Now lighter than before, I swiftly ran, 7
Following the nimble spirits up the ascent,
Nor thought of toil; when Virgil thus began:
"That love which Virtue kindles—so its fire
Shines forth, not idly in the bosom pent,
Is ever wont a kindred flame to inspire.
Hence from the hour that Juvenal appeared 13
To me, in the infernal Limbo cast,
And manifested all thy love—endeared
Thou wert to me in such a kindly sort,
As ne'er for one not seen hath been surpast;
So that to me these stairs will seem full short.
But tell me, and a kind indulgence lend, 19
If I with too much freedom loose the rein;
And reason with me now as with a friend.—
Say, how could Avarice in thy bosom find
A habitation, when such fruitful vein
Of wisdom had been stored within thy mind?"
This speech a transient smile in Statius moved; 25
And he thus answered him: "Thy every word,
As pledge of friendship, is by me beloved.
'Tis true that things do oftentimes appear,
Which matter false to cherish doubt afford,
Because the real sources are not clear.
This question evidences thy belief 31
That I was once the slave of avarice;
Haply since in yon round I suffer grief.
Know then the crime of avarice was removed
From me too far; hence contrary the vice,
Which here some thousand moons has been reproved.
And had I not well pondered in my mind 37
The exclamation that thou madest of old,
Indignant as it were with human kind—
'Unto what evils dost thou not excite

7. Having had another P removed from his brow, he is able to keep pace with Virgil and Statius. 10. These words are addressed to Statius. 35. The vice of prodigality. 40. From Virgil: "Quid non mortalia pectora cogis, Auri sacra fames?"—Æn. iii. 56. "Had I not profited," he says, "by your reprehension of mankind in these words, I should be suffering the punishment of the prodigal and avaricious in the Inferno," vii. 28.

The human breast, O cursed love of gold!'
Now should I urge the stones in ceaseless fight.
Then I perceived the hands may be too wide
Extended; and of unrestrained expense
Repented, as of other faults beside.
How many a one shall from the grave arise
With shaven locks, through ignorance of the offence;
Repenting neither when he lives or dies.
And know, the vice which doth some vice oppose,
(Its very opposite,) is with that vice
Destined to wither by the self-same woes.
Wherefore if I in penance have been seen
With those who purge themselves from avarice,
For the reverse my punishment hath been."
"What time that cruel war employed thy verse,"
The singer of bucolic song rejoined,
"Waged by ill-starred Jocasta's double curse—
To judge from what by Clio thou wert taught—
That faith did not as yet possess thy mind,
Without which, virtuous act availeth naught.
And if 'twere so, what sun or torch broke through
The darkness, so that with unshaken will
St. Peter's hallowed bark thou couldest pursue?"
And he replied: "First led by thee I trod
Parnassus' steeps, and drank its sacred rill;
And first by thee illumined—sought for God.
Thou didst as one who doth his torch by night
Behind him bear—not by himself discerned,
But to his followers yielding useful light—
When thou didst prophesy, 'A world revived,
Justice restored, primæval days returned,
An offspring born, from heaven itself derived.'
Poet and Christian I became through thee;

57. Eteocles and Polynices—a double source of woe to their mother Jocasta. 58. Clio is the muse invoked by Statius. "Quem prius heroum, Clio dabis?" "To judge from thy compositions," says Virgil, "thou wert not then a believer in that faith, without which 'it is impossible to please Him.'"—Hebrews xi. 6. 61. "If so, what heavenly grace or human learning burst the darkness of thy mind, and enabled thee to follow the steps of St. Peter?" 70. The prophecy of the Sybil—applied by Virgil to Octavius, (Ecl. iv. 5)—is by Dante here applied to our Saviour and supposed to have converted Statius.

But that more fully thou mayst understand,
Wrought in clear colours shall this outline be.—
Already in the impregnant world was sown
The new belief, wide spread through every land
By the apostles of the eternal throne;
And thy recorded words of prophecy
So well with the new preachers harmonized,
That their accustomed visitor was I.
So holy in my eyes the course they kept,
That when Domitian's torturing rod chastised,
Their sufferings never were by me unwept.
And while it was my lot on earth to bide,
I gave them friendly succour, and despised
(Their righteous habits known) all sects beside:
And ere in song I led the Grecians near
The Theban rivers, I had been baptized;
But secret held my Christian faith through fear;
Long time a Pagan still in outward show:
For this lukewarmness full four centuries
Round the fourth circle was I doomed to go.
Thou, therefore, who didst tear away the veil
That hid such mighty blessings from my eyes,—
While ample time is our's the mount to scale,
Tell me where our loved Terence may be found,
Cæcilius, Plautus, Varro, if thou knowest—
Whether among the damned, and in what round?"
"They, Persius, I, and other bards are there,"
My guide replied, "where dwells that Greek, the most
Of all her sons nursed by the Muses' care,
In the dark prison's foremost rank confined.—
Oft of the mountain are we wont to speak,
Where a perennial seat our Nurses find.
Euripides and Agatho there dwell,
Simonides, Anacreon—many a Greek
Whose honoured brows deserve the laurel well.
Thy heroines too are there—Antigone,
Ismene, sorrowing as on earth; and there

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73. "Magnus ab integro sæclorum nascitur ordo;
Jam redit et Virgo, redeunt Saturnia regna:
Jam nova progenies cœlo demittitur alto." Virg. Ecl. iv. 5.

103. *i.e.* In Limbo. See Inf. iv. 88, where Homer and other bards are mentioned! The "mountain" is Parnassus.

Argià may be seen, Deiphile,
She who disclosed the freshening spring Langià,
The daughter of Tiresias, Thetis fair,
And with her sisters famed Deidamià."
Now both the bards were silent, each intent 115
On casting round their eager eyes anew,
Free from the walls and from the steep ascent:—
Four of the handmaids, on the day attending,
Had dropt behind—the pole the fifth one drew,
Its glowing horn directly upwards bending:
When thus my guide: "Behoveth us to keep 121
The dexter shoulder turning tow'rds the verge,
As is our wont in circling round the steep."
Thus custom was our guide; and less dismayed
Our onward way proceeded we to urge,
Since we were sanctioned by that worthy shade.
They were advancing first;—behind them I 127
Went on alone, and listened to their talk,
Inspiring thoughts that nourish poetry.
But soon they checked their speech that pleased me well;
For lo, a tree stood midway in our walk,
With fruit delightful both to sight and smell.
And upward as a fir from bough to bough 133
Tapers, so down this tapered to the ground;
That none its branches might ascend, I trow:
And at that side on which our road was stopt,
From the high rock a streamlet fell around,
Sprinkling the lofty foliage as it dropt.—
The poets now approached the holy tree, 139
When from within the leaves came forth a tone,
"Eat of this fruit, but eat it sparingly:
Mary, who pleads for you, took more delight
That honour to the marriage feast be shown,
Than in indulging her own appetite.
The Roman women were content of yore 145
With water for their beverage:—Daniel erst,
Contemning food, was taught in wisdom's lore.—
Beauteous as gold, the earliest age of man.—
Hunger made acorns savoury; and through thirst
With sweetest nectar every streamlet ran.—

112. Hypsipile.

Locusts and honey were the food whereon 151
The Baptist in the lonely desert fed;
And hence the greatness, and the fame he won,
As in the Gospel history may be read."

CANTO XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

Among a number of pale emaciated spirits doing penance for gluttony, Dante recognises his friend Forese; who informs him that their pain consists in a keen desire to partake of the fruit of the tree. He takes occasion to inveigh against the immodesty of the Florentine women.

WHILE through the foliage green, with stedfast gaze 1
I looked intent, like one who in the vain
Pursuit of little birds consumes his days,
"Come now," to me my more than father cried;
"The time allotted us, my son, I fain
Would wish to some more useful task applied."
I turned my looks and steps with equal speed 7
Unto those Sages; charmed by whose discourse
Of that laborious road I took no heed.
And lo, a song, in plaintive tone, was heard—
"My lips, O Lord"—whose soul subduing force
Both sorrow and delight at once conferred.
"O my loved sire, what voices these?" said I. 13
"Spirits are hastening yonder," answered he,
"Perchance their knot of duty to untie."
As pilgrims, eager to pursue their way,
O'ertaking strangers, turn their looks to see;
Yet, as they gaze, speed on without delay;
Thus, from behind us, urged by greater haste, 19
A band of spirits came, and with fixed stare,
Devout and silent, kenned us as they passed.
Hollow the eye of each, and dark—their look
Pallid—and all their features were so spare,
That from the bones, the skin its figure took.
Thessalian Erisichthon was, I ween, 25
Less dried and withered in the form he wore,
Through long continued hunger, when most lean.

11. "O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise."—Psalm li. 15. 25. Erisichthon of Thessaly cut down a grove sacred to Ceres, and was afflicted by the goddess with insatiable hunger.

"Behold," immersed in inward thought, I said,
"The race who lost Jerusalem of yore,
When Mary on her infant offspring fed."
The sockets seemed like rings without the gems:
Who readeth "omo" on man's visage, he
Had there full plainly recognised the m's.
Who could believe, unless instructed first,
How water and an apple's scent could be
So potent in producing want and thirst?
Now was I wondering at their being so thin;
For not as yet could I discover why
So meagre and so shrivelled was their skin,
When from the deep recesses of the head
A spirit turning fixed on me his eye;
Then, "O what grace is this!" aloud he said.
His countenance had not his name revealed;
But in his voice I could not fail to trace
That which his withered features had concealed.
This spark it was that lighted up amain
My recollection of his altered face,
And brought Forese to my mind again.
"The scaly blotches that deface my skin—
Oh! look not on them, nor," such was his prayer,
"Regard the wretched plight that I am in.
But let me know the truth concerning thee;
And who are those two spirits with thee there—
Make no delay in telling all to me."
I answered him: "Erewhile I wept thee dead;
But now with no less grief am I distressed
To see thy visage so disfigured.
Then, prithee, say, what doth thy features mar:
Bid *me* not speak while wonder fills my breast;
He ill can speak whose thoughts are wandering far."

30. The Hebrew lady—who suffering the pangs of starvation during the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, fed on her own son—thus fulfilling the prophecy of Moses, Deut. xxviii. 56. See Eusebius, b. iii. 116. 32. The word 'omo' (*i. e.* uomo, or man,) is supposed to be represented in the face—the two eyes forming the O's, and the eyebrow and nose the M, more distinctly marked in these emaciated countenances. 35. The tree and the stream mentioned in the last canto, lines 131, 137, and again in the present, line 62, &c. 48. Forese was a great friend of Dante, and the brother of Corso Donati.

Then he to me: "By ordinance divine 61
Into the plant and water left behind
A virtue is instilled; and hence I pine.
All these who wail in mournful songs, that erst
To excess in food their appetites inclined,
Regain their purity by want and thirst.
Desire to eat and drink is rendered keen 67
By the rich odour of the fruit and spray,
Which shed their fragrance o'er the foliage green.
Nor once alone is this sad circuit made,
To renovate our pain—pain do I say,
When 'solace' is the word I should have said?
For that same will conducts us to the tree, 73
Which led Christ joyful 'Eli' to exclaim,
When with his precious blood he set us free."
And I to him: "Forese, from that day
When to the better life thy spirit came,
Not yet five little years have passed away.—
If power of sinning ceased in thee, before 79
Arrived the season of that wholesome woe,
Which unto God espouses us once more,
How was it that so high thy spirit soared?
Thee had I thought to find far down below,
Where time mispent, by time must be restored."
"It was my Nella, who so soon," he said, 85
"Led me to drink of suffering's wormwood sweet,
By her fond tears for me profusely shed.
She, through her prayers devout and sighs unfeigned,
Released me from the coast that stays our feet,
And from the other rounds my freedom gained.
So much more dear in sight of heaven is she— 91
My widowed wife, by me beloved so well,
As she is single in her piety:

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72. *i. e.* Pleasure in satisfying divine justice. 74. "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani." As Christ joyfully underwent death to save mankind, so these souls voluntarily returned to the tree, and underwent the pain of thirst for the purpose of obtaining purification. 81. In his Convito, Dante says that "the loyal soul in the fourth period of life re-espouses herself to God, contemplating the end which it anticipates." Canzone, Trat. iv. 84. In the outskirts of Purgatory. 85. Forese's young and virtuous widow.—Through her intercession for the soul of her husband the period was shortened of admission into Purgatory.

For that Barbagia is of chaster life,
Where all Sardinia's wandering outcasts dwell,
Than that Barbagia where I left my wife.
What, O dear brother, wouldst thou have me say? 97
A future time already I behold,
Nor ancient then shall be the present day—
When from the pulpit it shall be declared
In Florence, that no more her ladies bold
Shall walk in public with their bosoms bared.
What barbarous or what Moorish women e'er 103
Required or church or other discipline,
To make them in the streets some covering wear?
But if the unblushing ones could haply know,
What heaven's swift vengeance doth for them design,
Full many a mouth to howl would not be slow:
For if my foresight doth not lead me wrong, 109
Grief shall be their's, ere bearded is his face
Who now is lulled to sleep with nurse's song.
Brother, no more conceal thyself I pray:
Behold, not I alone, but all this race
With wonder gaze on the divided ray."
I answered him: "If what thou wert with me, 115
Thou call to mind, and what with thee was I,
Still bitter will the recollection be.
That life I left, at his persuasive prayer
Who guides my steps, not many days gone by,
When (to the Sun I point) his sister fair
Full orbed displayed herself; know this is he, 121
Who from the truly dead, through night profound,
Hath in my real flesh conducted me.
Proceeding on by his encouragement,
I climbed the mountain, and about it wound,—
That mount which straighteneth what the world hath bent:
And he hath vowed his succour still to deign,
Till I arrive where Beatrice shall be; 128
There, reft of him behoves it I remain.
Lo Virgil, who these words of comfort spake;"

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94. The mention of his wife's piety and worth leads Forese into a severe invective against the Florentine ladies of that day. Barbagia is a tract in Sardinia, to which Florence is compared for the immodesty of its females.

And him I pointed out :—"that other, he,
For whom but now you felt your kingdom shake
With joy, his happy exit hence to see."

CANTO XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

Conversation continued between Dante and Forese. In the presence of Statius, Forese confesses the superiority of his friend's poetry. Forese predicts the violent death of Corso Donati, Dante's political enemy. Another tree.—Voices issue from it, recording examples of gluttony. An Angel invites the three poets up to the seventh and last circle.

OUR progress checked not the discourse we held, 1
Nor checked discourse our progress ;—on we went,
Like to a ship by favouring gale impelled.
The shades, that seemed as things that twice had died,
Drew through their deep sunk eyes astonishment,
When of my breathing fully certified.
And I, continuing my discourse, thus spake : 7
"That spirit mounts perchance more tardily
Than else it would, for its companions' sake.
But say where dwells Piccarda, if thou know ;
And tell, if any one of note I see
Among this crowd who gaze upon me so."
"My sister, good and beautiful—which most 13
I know not—triumphs in Olympus' height,
Bearing her crown amid the joyful host."
He spake ; then added this : "'Tis lawful here
To call each one by name—so lost to sight
All trace of likeness, through our fast severe.—
This,"—pointing with his finger to a shade— 19
"Is Buonagiunta the Lucchese ;—that face
Beyond, through fasting most unsightly made,
Held in his arms erewhile the Church divine :

10. Piccarda Donati, sister of Forese and of Corso Donati, was a most beautiful maiden, who took the veil in the convent of St. Clara, and devoted herself to the service of God. Her brothers, however, who had promised her in marriage to a Florentine, forced her to marry him against her will. Her health immediately declined, and she shortly died. She is assigned a place in the Paradiso, (iii. 49.) 20. A poet of Lucca.—The lean face beyond, Simon of Tours, afterwards Pope Martin IV—a great Epicure.

From Tours he came, and now, in hopes of grace,
Purges, by fast, Bolsena's eels and wine."
Thus, one by one, he showed me many more: 25
To hear their names seemed pleasing to this race;
Not one the hue of discontentment wore.
Ubaldin della Pila there I saw
Through hunger grinding air—and Boniface,
To many with his crozier giving law;
I saw Marchese—who indulged his will 31
At Forli, drinking deeply, though less dry
He felt than now, yet ne'er could have his fill.
But as a man who marks, and learns to prize
One more than other,—him of Lucca I
So marked, who kenned me with most earnest eyes.
He muttered; and the word Gentucca came 37
Forth from his lips where Justice chose to wreak
His vengeance by the ever parching flame;
"O Spirit," I exclaimed, "who seemest to be
Bent on communion—let me hear thee speak;
So shalt thou satisfy thyself and me."
He answered: "She is born, who though still loose 43
Her tresses be, my city shall endear,
However some may load it with abuse.
Depart thou then with this prophetic strain;
And if my murmuring should confuse thine ear,
The events themselves will make its meaning plain.
But say if I behold the man who first 49
Gave to the world the rhymes which thus begin:
'Ladies who in the ways of love are versed.'"
And I replied: "One am I who indite

28. A noted glutton. 29. Boniface, Bishop of Ravenna. 31. "His butler telling him, it was said in the city that he did nothing but drink, he desired him to answer, that he was always thirsty." Venturi. 38. *i.e.* From the parched throat of Buonagiunta. Gentucca was a noble and beautiful maiden of Lucca, of whom Dante, during his exile at that place, was enamoured. We must remember his visit to Purgatory is supposed to be in 1300, two years before his exile. 43. *i. e.* This Gentucca, not yet grown up, shall endear to him the city of Lucca, however infamous for its peculators. See Inf. xxi. 41. 51. "Donne, ch'avete intelletto d'amore." This is the first verse of a canzone composed by Dante in praise of Beatrice, in his Vita Nuova. 52. Dante refrains from mentioning his own name; and ascribes any merit in his verses to the love of wisdom, by which he was inspired.

When love inspires, and as he speaks within,
So, in accordance with his bidding, write."
"Brother," he said, "I now perceive the cause,
Why I and many others vainly strove
To catch the style that wins thee such applause.
I well discover how your plumes have sailed
Close in the wake of your inspirer, love;
And this the point where our endeavour failed.
He who to snatch a further grace is bent,
Sees not the difference the two styles display:"
And here the spirit ceased, as though content.
E'en as the birds that winter near the Nile
Marshal their numbers in compact array,
Then fly more swiftly and proceed in file;
So all the assembled spirits turned their face;
And by desire and meagreness made light,
Accelerated instantly their pace.
And as a man, by running sore opprest,
Suffers his comrades to pursue their flight,
Until he hath relieved his panting chest;
So did Forese let that sacred train
Pass on before, and come behind with me—
Exclaiming, "When shall we two meet again?"
"My term on earth I know not," I replied;
"But swift soe'er as my return may be,
In wish still sooner shall I reach thy side:
So lost to goodness more and more each day
The place where I on earth was doomed to dwell,
And bent on its own ruin."—"Now away,"
He said;—"for him, chief cause of this, I see
Drawn at a horse's tail towards that grim dell,

). *i. e.* By adopting an artificial style. 64. Dante often mentions Cranes. See Inf. v. 46; Purg. xxvi. 43; Par. xviii. 73. 69. They had slackened their pace to observe Dante; and now, when Forese, one of their party, seemed to have finished his speech, they renew their haste in order to complete their purification. Forese, however, lags behind to inquire when he should again see his friend. 76. Dante answers, he knows not when he shall die, but that Florence is so "lost to goodness," he cannot quit life and return too quickly. 83. The allusion is to Corso Donati, chief of the Neri or Guelphs, and the supporter of the mob against the ancient families. He was brother to Dante's wife, and his political enemy. Hence he is never mentioned by name. Suspected of aiming at

Where guilt may never expiated be.
Quicker at every step the horse is borne, 85
Its pace increasing, till it strikes a blow,
And leaves his body miserably torn.
Nor long those wheels shall roll"—and up to heaven
He raised his eyes—"ere thou shalt fully know
What may not yet in clearer speech be given.
But now proceed alone, for time is here 91
So precious, that I may no more remain,
Measuring my footsteps with thy slow career,"
As from a troop, advancing in array,
Issues a knight at gallop, to obtain
The honour of commencing the affray—
With rapid step so left he us behind; 97
And on the road I tarried with the two
Such eminent instructors of mankind.
And when he had so far his way made good,
That now mine eyes his figure could not view
More clearly than his words I understood,—
Laden with fruit and foliage I discerned 103
Another apple tree, which seemed full nigh,
Though towards it were my thoughts but newly turned.
Beneath it raised their hands a numerous train,
Who to the leaves were muttering forth some cry,
Like clamorous children that entreat in vain—
Imploring one who answers not their prayer, 109
But, to augment the ardour of their flame,
Displays the object, raised aloft in air.
Then parted they, of error disabused;
And onward to the mighty tree we came,
Which all these fervent prayers and tears refused.
"Pass to the other side,—approach not near; 115
Higher stands the tree where Eve her guilt incurred;
From it was raised the plant that groweth here."
Thus from amid the branches some one cried;
When Virgil, Statius, and myself, who heard,
Passed on our way along the mountain's side.

sovereign power, and called upon to answer the charge, he defended himself with arms, till falling, in his endeavour to escape, he was trodden upon by a horse, and killed by the populace. See Ugo Foscolo Dis., p. 137.

THE GLUTTONS



BENEATH IT RAISED THEIR HANDS A NUMEROUS TRAIN
WHO TO THE LEAVES WERE MUTTERING FORTH SOME CRY
LIKE CLAMOROUS CHILDREN THAT ENTREAT IN VAIN. Purg. XXIV.

"Recall those monsters," it resumed, "of yore 121
Formed in the clouds, who, sated with the feast,
Their breasts of double front 'gainst Theseus bore;—
The Hebrews too,—who knelt to drink the rills,
When Gideon with an army much decreased
Descended against Madian from the hills."
Thus, to the margin keeping close, we passed, 127
Hearing the tales of gluttony they told,
And the dire recompense it brings at last.
Then, set at large upon the lonely coast,
A thousand steps and more we onward hold,
Each one in silent contemplation lost.
"Ye lonely three, why pensive thus proceed?" 133
A voice exclaimed; whereat through sudden dread
I shook, e'en like some frightened paltry steed.
I raised my eye to scan who it might be;
Nor glass or metal e'er so bright and red
Were in a furnace ever seen by me,
As one who uttered: "If ye now desire 139
To mount, ye needs must journey by this track,
Which they pursue who peace would here acquire."
Mine eyes were dazzled by his aspect bright;
Whereat unto my teachers turned I back,
Like one who walks by hearing, not by sight.
As when, announcing the approach of day, 145
Impregnated with herbs and flowers of spring,
Breathes fresh and redolent the air of May,—
Such was the breeze that gently fanned my head;
And I perceived the waving of the wing,
Which all around ambrosial odours shed:
And I could hear a voice: "O blessed they 151
By grace enlightened so, that never gust
Of appetite may lead their will astray—
Their hunger ever kept in limits just!"

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121. The Centaurs, invited by Pirithous to his wedding, intoxicated themselves, and endeavoured to carry off the bride, but were prevented by Theseus. They are mentioned as instances of gluttony, as well as the Hebrews.

CANTO XXV.

ARGUMENT.

Dante starts a question, how the shades, which require no food, can become emaciated. Statius to explain this, enters into a history of the first formation of the soul; and shows how, after it leaves the body, it is impressed by the same passions which influence it when in the body. In the seventh and last circle incontinence is punished. Instances of Chastity

THE hour enjoined us both to mount the height;
For unto Taurus the meridian now
The sun had left, and to the Scorpion night.
Wherefore like one who stays not in his speed,
But onward strains, whate'er confront his brow,
If stimulated by the spur of need;
So through that narrow track we entrance made,
One first, the other following up the stair,
Whose narrowness to walk abreast forbade.
As the young stork now elevates the wing,
Eager for flight,—now drops it in despair,
To leave the nest not yet adventuring;
So, swayed alternately between desire
And fear to ask, like one at last was I,
Who moves his lips already to inquire.
My father, letting not our progress bar
Discourse, said: "Let the tardy arrow fly,
Since thou hast drawn the bow of speech so far."
Then opened I my lips—all fear subdued—
And thus began; "How can it be that they
Can e'er grow thin who have no need of food?"
"If thou hadst Meleager's fate recalled,
Who wasted with the wasting torch away,

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2. "The sun had passed the meridian two hours; and that meridian was now occupied by the constellation of Taurus, to which as the Scorpion is opposite, the latter was consequently at the meridian of night." Cary. 20. Having expressed his astonishment at the leanness of the spirits, (see xxiii. 34, 37) Dante at last ventures to ask how they who require not food should so consume away. This gives rise to the following curious investigation. 22. The fates ordained his life should last as long as a brand they put into the fire. "Dante intends to show, that as Meleager was consumed away, not by want of food, but by the decree of the fates; so, by divine ordinance, leanness may exist among the shades who require not food." Lombardi.

This doubt," he said, "had not thy mind enthralled:
And hadst thou thought how, in a mirror seen, 25
Thine image doth thy every turn obey,
What now seems difficult, had easy been.
But that thy mind may fully rest assured,
See Statius here, whom I entreat and pray,
That by his succour may thy wounds be cured."
"If in thy presence," Statius made reply, 31
"The eternal prospects I to him unroll,
Bear with the excuse—I cannot thee deny."
He then began: "My son, if thou aright
Receive my words in thy attentive soul,
They to the doubt proposed shall furnish light.
Pure blood, required not by the thirsty veins, 37
But which, like remnant of superfluous food
Upon a table overcharged, remains,
Within the deep recesses of the heart
With an informing virtue is endued,
Like that which life doth to the frame impart.
Perfected more, below it is conveyed, 43
And thence impelled, until at last it flows
Into the place for its reception made.
The one receives the other—one inclined
To act—the other passive—as dispose
The heart's recesses, where it is refined.
Then meeting, it begins to operate, 49
Coagulating first;—gives life anon
To that it brought to a consistent state.
Become an active faculty, the soul,
Like to a plant, (different in this alone
That one still travels—one hath reach'd its goal)
Continues working, moves and feels, as though 55
Sea sponge it were, and thence acquires the art
To organize the powers that from it flow.
Now through each part, my son, doth wide expand

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25. The meaning is: "As the reflection of a form in a mirror undergoes the same modifications with the form itself—so the ghostly shade or image of the body is affected by the changes of the soul." 29. *i.e.* That Statius, who is a Christian, may answer your questions relative to the union of the soul and body. 31. Statius, before he complies, apologises to Virgil for presuming to become a teacher in his presence, although at his desire.

The virtue issuing from the parent's heart,
Where all the limbs are formed by nature's hand.
But how the creature reason doth attain, 61
Thou see'st not yet:—here one more wise than thou
Hath erred in doctrine; taking it as plain
That from the passive intellect the mind
Is quite distinct—because he saw not how
An organ to it could be well assigned.
Open thy breast to what I now explain:— 67
When in the embryo, ere man's life begin,
Ripens a perfect structure of the brain,
The primal Mover then the wonders wrought
By nature sees delighted, and within
Breathes a new breath, with highest virtue fraught.
What it finds active there, that it collects 73
Into itself, and forms one soul which lives,
Perceives, and feels, and on itself reflects.
And that my words less wonder may excite,
See how the grape its vinous juice derives
From the sun's rays and all-pervading light.
When Lachesis hath finished her whole line, 79
Freed from the flesh the spirit bears away
The human powers as well as the divine,
The others, all, as 'twere, remaining mute—
Memory, intelligence, and will;—and they
Are rendered far more active and acute.
To one or other bank, without delay, 85
Falls of itself the liberated sprite,
Then first acquainted with its future way.
When to its destined place, it doth arrive,
The informing virtue round it beams as bright
As round its members when it was alive.
And as the air, with rain when laden, seems 91

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62. Averroës—who taught that there is only one universal mind distributed throughout the human race; because he saw no particular organ (as the eye to the sight) assigned to the intellect, considered as an individual faculty. 77. "As the heat of the sun, reaching the aqueous humours of the vine, changes them into wine; so, Statius would infer, the new spirit, created by God, and united to the sensitive soul, changes it into a reasoning soul." Lombardi. 85. *i.e.* Either to the bank of Acheron, Inf. iii. 123, or to that of the Tiber, Purg. ii. 101, where on its arrival, the soul first learns its final destination.

As though with various colours it were dressed,
Through the reflection of the solar beams;
Thus doth the circling air that form assume
Upon it by the stranger soul impressed,
Which now arrives to meet its final doom.
And like unto a flame, which doth pursue 97
Fire, wheresoe'er it moves to,—even so
The soul is followed by its figure new.
Since its own image it possesseth, hence
'Tis called a shade, and hence the shades we know
Are gifted, e'en to sight, with every sense.
Hence speak we—laugh we; hence thou mayst believe, 103
We utter sighs, or pour forth bitter tears—
So thou throughout the mountain may'st perceive—
As we are moved by passion and desire,
In corresponding form each shade appears;
And this the cause that led thee to inquire.
Now drew we near to the last circle, there 109
Our eager steps we tow'rds the right inclined,
While other interest employed our care.
Forth from the bank a flame was seen to play;
And from the cornice upward rose a wind,
Which strongly checked and drove the fire away:
Whence it behoved us one by one to go 115
On the open side:—here had I cause to fear
The flame—there, dreaded to fall down below.
My guide exclaimed: "Now must a tightened rein
Be kept before thine eyes, for know that here
Once falling, never may ye mount again."
"O God supreme of mercy infinite," 121
Was chaunted then from out the raging flame,
Which made me thither bend my eager sight.
Souls walking through the fire there met my view;
Wherefore to make my steps with their's the same,
My looks were e'en divided 'twixt the two.
The song concluded—"Not a man I know," 127
Aloud they utter; when they recommence

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94. "This aerial vesture of the soul is not a poetical fiction, but is founded on the opinion of Origen and other ancient fathers."—Lombardi. 106. This is the answer to the question, line 30—how the spirits could grow thin. 121. The words "Summæ Deus clementiæ" are the beginning of a hymn of the Church, offered up for chastity.

The former hymn in accents soft and low.
This finished—they exclaim: "Within the wood
Diana kept, and chased Callisto thence,
With Cytherea's poisonous drugs imbued."
Then to their song returning, they recite 133
Examples old of men and women chaste,
By virtue ruled, and sacred nuptial rite.
And they, I ween, continued in this mood
During the time the fire their forms embraced:
Such care is needed, and such sort of food
To heal the wound for which they here are placed.

CANTO XXVI.

ARGUMENT.

The curiosity of the shades to know how Dante's body could cast a shadow—On his informing them he is really alive, Guido Guinicelli addresses him. Dante's joy to meet with him, whom he speaks of as his father in poetry. Guido points out, and acknowledges the superiority of Arnaud the Provençal.

WHILE, one before the other, thus we went 1
Around the margin—oft the master said,
"Look well: be not in vain my caution lent."
The sun advancing struck me on the right;
And all the west, by his fair rays o'erspread,
Was changing now its azure hue for white.
My shadow made the beams appear to glow 7
Brighter than wont; and at such prodigy
Came flocking many a shade the cause to know.
This first it was which to the spirits gave
Occasion thus to hold discourse of me;
"No fictious body he appears to have:"
And some of them advancing tow'rds me, came 13
Near as they could—with eager look intent,
Lest haply they should pass from out the flame.
"O thou who journeyest on behind the rest,
Perhaps not slower, but more reverent,
Reply to me, by thirst and fire opprest:
Not for my sake alone an answer grant;— 19

12. See note to Inf. xii. 13. 18. *i. e.* By thirst for information.

All these desire it with a thirst more keen
Than Indian who for cooling stream doth pant.
Say how thou makest of thyself a wall
Against the sun, as though thou hadst not been
Caught in the net of death, a captive thrall?"
Thus one bespoke me. I had straight my name
Revealed, but for the wish I felt to view
Another novelty; for lo, there came
Along the middle of the burning way,
To meet the first, a second party, who
Made me draw up, their features to survey.
On either hand I saw them haste their meeting,
And kiss each one the other—pausing not,—
Contented to enjoy so short a greeting.
Thus do the ants among their dingy band
Face one another,—each their neighbour's lot
Haply to scan, and how their fortunes stand.
This friendly meeting over—ere they start,
Each party strives the other's voice to drown;
The one vociferating on their part—
"The cities of the plain;" while the other cries—
"That bliss her monstrous lover's flame might crown,
Pasiphaë assumed a base disguise."
Then like to cranes, that some unto the sands,
And some to the Riphæan mountains fly,
These from the sun, those from the ice;—the bands,
Dividing thus, or come, or haste away,
While weeping they renew their former cry,
And their most fitting and appropriate lay.
And, as before, they unto me drew near—
The same who erst addressed to me a prayer—
Their looks betraying great desire to hear.
I, who had twice observed their eager mien,
Began; "O spirits, ye who certain are,
Some future day, a state of peace to win—
Not immature, or by old age subdued,
Are left on earth my bodily remains;
But with me I convey both flesh and blood.
To cure my blindness I ascend this stair:
A Lady high enthroned such grace obtains;

59. Beatrice.

Hence through your world my mortal frame I bear.
But may your highest hopes be shortly crowned; 61
And in heaven's blessed mansions may ye dwell—
That heaven where love and ampler space abound,—
As ye inform me who ye are, and who
That multitude (so that my page may tell),
Whom passing yonder in your rear I view."
Like to an inexperienced mountain clown, 67
Who round him throws a dull and stupid gaze,
When first he visits some well peopled town—
Such was the image that each shade expressed:
But when they had o'ercome that wild amaze,
Which soon in lofty mind is laid to rest,—
He that before inquired, began again: 73
"O blessed! who, to live more virtuously,
Experience of our country wouldst attain,—
The spirits whom we meet that guilt incurred,
Whence as he rode in triumph was the cry—
The opprobrious cry of 'Queen' by Cæsar heard.
Wherefore on parting, 'Weep ye,' they exclaim; 79
Themselves rebuking, thus to make the fire
The more intensely felt, by adding shame.
Of great enormity our crime, because,
Following like beasts our infamous desire,
We broke the bonds imposed by nature's laws.
That thus our own disgrace may be increased— 85
Departing, we repeat the name of her
Who took of old the figure of a beast.
Our actions now thou knowest and our crime;
Each wouldst thou know by name, and who we were,
I could not tell thee, neither have I time:
But of myself, be fully satisfied; 91
Guido am I, allowed such early grace,
Because I deeply sorrowed ere I died."
Like to Lycurgus' sons, when in his sadness

74. The improvement of himself, Dante tells us, was the object of his imaginary journey. 78. "Gallias Cæsar subegit, Nicomedes Cæsarem." Suetonius, Life of Julius Cæsar, cap. 49. 92. Guido Guinicelli.—See note, xi. 97.—Penitence before death enabled him, he says, to enter Purgatory thus early. 94. Lycurgus, exasperated with Hypsipile for deserting his infant son Ofeltes, killed by a serpent while she went to show the Argive army the river Langià (canto xxii.

They joyed to see again their mother's face,—
So great, though not so manifest, my gladness,
When uttered by himself, my father's name
I heard—the father too of those, who e'er
By their sweet love-songs gained them higher fame.
Speechless, and hearing nought, I pensive went
Long time—still looking on his features dear;
Though close approach the burning flames prevent.
And when with gazing I mine eyes had fed,
I offered me all prompt to do his will,
With words that might not be discredited.
Then he: "Thy loving speech hath left such trace
Within my breast, that ne'er can Lethe's rill
Obscure the impression, or its stamp efface.
But, if thy solemn vows believed may be,
Say why thy every look and accent bear
Tokens of love and kindness unto me?"
"The cause," I said, "is in your pleasant strains,
Which shall their very characters endear,
Long as the language now in use remains."
"Yonder is one, O brother," he exclaimed,
(And with his finger pointed out a shade)
"In the maternal tongue more justly famed.
In lays of love and stories of romance
He both excelled, nor cared for what fools said,
Who wished the bard of Limoges to advance.
To sound, more than to truth, they lend their ear;
Thus confirmation to their judgment giving,
Ere art or reason they consent to hear.
Many of yore Guittonë thus upheld—
To elevate his reputation striving,
Till with the multitude the truth prevailed.
And if thy ample privilege permits
That to the cloister thou mayest now proceed,
Where Christ the Abbot of the college sits,

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112), was about to slay her, when her [illegible] Thoas and Eumenius had the delight of finding her, and saving her from the king's resentment. See Statius, Theb. iv. and v. 97. Dante calls him "father" as his predecessor and instructor in poetry. 116. Arnaud, the celebrated Provençal poet. (See line 142.) He was considered by Dante superior to Guido, and Gerault di Berneil, "the bard of Limoges." 129. Paradise. Abbot is here used in its original sense of Abba. Father.

One paternoster say to Him for me,
As far as we, in this world dwelling, need,
Where from the power of sinning we are free."
Then haply anxious to make room for one 133
Who near him stood, he vanished 'mid the flame,
As dives a fish in water, and is gone.
Straight, to the shade he pointed out, some space
I nearer drew, and begged to learn that name,
For which my wish reserved a gracious place.
"Such pleasure in thy courtesy I feel," 139
With open heart he then began to say,
"I neither can nor will my name conceal.
Arnaud am I, who pass this ford of fire
Mourning my follies, and behold the day
In prospect, which hath kindled my desire.
Now by that worth which guideth thee on high, 145
Soon as the fitting time is come, I pray
That thou assist me in my misery."
Then through the cleansing fire he sped away.

CANTO XXVII.

ARGUMENT.

In the hope of obtaining a sight of Beatrice, Dante follows Virgil into the flame. He passes through it unhurt—reposes during night on the steps of a lofty stair—and in a dream sees Leah and Rachel. Reaching the summit of the stair, Dante is informed by Virgil that Beatrice must be his guide in future.

THE sun was darting now his earliest beam, 1
There where his great Creator's blood was shed,
(High Libra sinking under Ebro's stream,
And noontide fervour scorching Ganges' flood)
So that where then I was, day 'gan to fade,
When in our presence God's glad Angel stood.
Upon the brink he stood beyond the flame; 7
And, "Blessed are the pure in heart," he chaunted,
In voice that mortal clearness overcame;
Then:—"Pass not on until the fire hath stung,

131. *i. e.* As far as "lead us not into temptation." See canto xi. 22.

1. "It was sunrise at Jerusalem, mid-day in India, midnight in Portugal, and sunset where the poets now were."—Boyd.

Ye holy spirits! enter it undaunted,
And list attentively to what is sung."
As we approached the Angel, thus he said: 13
And I, desirous to obey, became
Like to a man who in the tomb is laid.
Upward my hands, together clasped, I raised;—
For fancy pictured in the glowing flame
Those human forms on which I oft have gazed.
The good conductors turned around to me; 19
And Virgil said: "Although, my son, 'tis true
Torture may here exist—death cannot be.
Remember, oh! remember;......and if I
On Geryon's back once led thee safely through,
How much more now—approaching God so nigh?
Know certainly, that though within this fire 25
A thousand years or more thou wert to stand,
Forth each particular hair should come entire:
And if perchance thou think'st my words deceive,
Draw near, and with thy garment's hem in hand,
Make trial of it, and thou must believe.
Cast every fear, cast every fear away; 31
Turn hither, and with confidence come on:"
Still firm, against conviction, did I stay.
When thus he saw me fixed and stubborn, he,
Somewhat incensed, exclaimed: "Behold, my son,
This wall divideth Beatrice and thee."
As Pyramus in death unclosed his eye 37
At Thisbe's name, and viewed that face so dear,
(What time the mulberry took its purple dye)
So, my obduracy subdued, I pressed
Close to my guide, her name alone to hear,
Which freshly springs for ever in my breast.
Whereat his head he shook, as thus he said: 43
"How! stay we here?" then smiled on me, as though
A child I were, by apples captive led.
Within the fire then first he took his place,
Entreating Statius last to enter, who

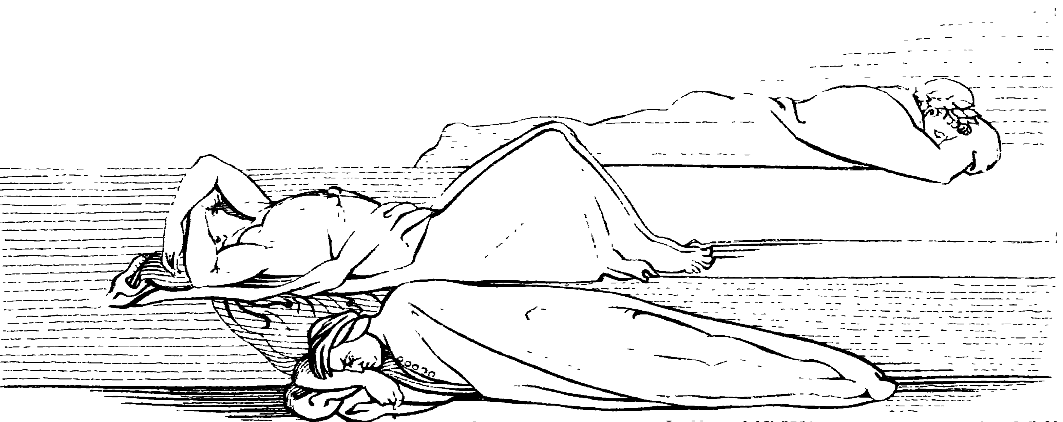
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23. Geryon was the monster who carried Virgil and Dante on his back, down from the seventh to the eighth circle of the Inferno. xvii. 91. 36. *i. e.* This flame is the only obstacle between thee and Beatrice. Virgil well knew the effect of the mere mention of her name. 44. *i.e.* "Shall we remain here, when we are so near Beatrice?"

Before divided us no little space.
When entered—to relieve me from the heat, 49
I fain had thrown me into liquid glass;
The rage of the combustion was so great.
My gracious father, to encourage me,
Discoursed of Beatrice, as on we pass,
Exclaiming, "Now I seem her eyes to see."
A voice beyond conducted us along, 55
Till, issuing from the flames, we reached the stair,
Attentive only to that heavenly song.
"Come, O ye blessed of my Father," sounded
Forth from within a light so dazzling fair,
That its effulgence all my sense confounded.
"The sun," it added, "sinks, and eve is nigh; 61
Linger not here, but swift pursue your way,
Ere night arriving shrouds the western sky."
Strait rose our upward pathway through the stone,
In such direction that I broke the ray,
Which from the weary sun was feebly thrown.
And but few steps of that high stair were passed, 67
When we perceived the sun had sunk to rest,
Since on the ground no shadow now was cast.
And ere that night had o'er the horizon spread,
Through all its spacious bounds, her sombre vest,
And one unvarying hue on all things shed,
A step his pillow each of us had made; 73
For with the wish, the very power to climb,
The nature of the mount itself forbade.
Like goats, that, having o'er the crags pursued
Their wanton sports, now quiet pass the time
In ruminating—sated with their food,
Beneath the shade, while glows the sun on high— 79
Watched by the goatherd with unceasing care,
As on his staff he leans with watchful eye;—
And like a shepherd who, the night throughout,
Dwells by his peaceful flock i' the open air,
Watching lest beasts should put them to the rout;

54. "Pleasure cannot be found in any other thing below save in contemplating these eyes and this smile.... For in that look alone is human perfection attained, i.e. the perfection of reason." Dante, Convito, Trat. iii. cap. 15. 58. St. Matthew, xxv. 34. These words are sung by the Angel, so shrouded in his own effulgence as to be invisible to Dante.

THE POETS REPOSING



"A STEP HIS PILLOW EACH OF US HAD MADE."

Thus on the pavement all we three were lying—
I—like the goat, and like to shepherds they,—
The rock, on either side, a flank supplying.
But little from without appeared in sight,—
That little, yet sufficient to display
The stars more large than usual, and more bright.
Thus ruminating, and on these intent,
Sleep seized me—sleep, which oft, presaging, knows
Of things to come, or ere arrive the event.
It was the hour, when on the mount, I deem,
Her early radiance Cytheræa throws,
She who for ever burns with love's warm beam,—
When, in a dream, a lady fair and young
Methought I saw advancing o'er a mead,
And flowers collecting, as these words she sung:
"Be it known to any who my name demands,
That I am Leah, thus, as I proceed,
Weaving a garland with these beauteous hands.
I deck me for my pleasure at the glass;
But Rachel from her mirror never stirs,—
Before it wont the live long day to pass:
She takes delight in viewing her fair eyes,
And Contemplation's placid joys are hers;
While mine from active occupation rise."
Now broke the streaks that tell the approach of day,
(Grateful to pilgrims most, who spurn repose,
Returning home, upon their lessening way)
And on each side the shadows vanished o'er me—
My slumber with them; when I quickly rose,
Seeing the mighty masters risen before me.
"That most delightful fruit, of which in quest
Man searches through so many boughs with care,
This day shall lull thy keen desire to rest."
These words from Virgil with delight I heard;
And never gift, how beautiful soe'er,
On the receiver equal bliss conferred.
Desire upon desire to climb the height
So came upon me, that, each step I gained,

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91. *i.e.* Intent on contemplating the unusual splendour of the stars.
101. Leah, the personification of active life—her sister Rachel, of contemplative life. 115. The "promised fruit," (Inf. xvi. 62,) *i.e.* true happiness, vainly sought among the deceitful and perishable things of this world.

I felt the wings expand to aid my flight.
Swiftly we mounted up the ascent; and when
The summit of the stair we had attained,
Virgil regarded me with earnest ken,
And said: "The fires both temporal and eterne, 127
Son, hast thou seen; now in a place art thou,
Where I, unaided, can no more discern;—
Thus far with art and skill thy steps I've urged:
Take then thy pleasure for thine escort now—
Forth of the steep and narrow ways emerged.
Behold the sun upon thy forehead thrown— 133
Behold the trees, the flowers, of every hue,
In this most happy soil spontaneous sown.
Here mayst thou stray, or rest beneath the shade,
Till, bright with joy, those eyes shall greet thy view
Which, late suffused with tears, implored my aid.
No more expect or sign or word from me; 139
Thy will henceforth is upright, free, and sound;
To slight its impulse, were a sin;—then be
Lord o'er thyself,—be mitred, and be crowned."

CANTO XXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

Arriving at the summit of the mountain, Dante enters the forest of the terrestrial Paradise. On the opposite bank of the river Lethe, he beholds Matelda gathering flowers as she sings. She explains the properties of the fruits belonging to this delicious region.

EAGER that heavenly forest to survey, 1
Whose living verdure, grateful to the eye,
Tempered the fervour of the new born day—
Waiting no more, I left the rocky bound,
Over the plain proceeding tardily,
Whose fragrant soil breathed odours all around.
A pleasant air that ever blew the same, 7

---

127. The fire of Purgatory and of Hell. 137. *i. e.* Till the arrival of Beatrice.—The more to excite Dante, Virgil calls to his memory the kind and affectionate manner in which she first undertook to assist him, alluding to the Inf. ii. 115. 142. *i. e.* "Now thou art thine own master, free from the bondage of sin, and possessing sound views of religion, I invest thee with the insignia of power, both civil and religious."

1. The terrestrial paradise, or abode of our first parents.

Soft as the impulse of a gentle wind,
With mild impression o'er my forehead came;
By which the leaves, all trembling as they were
Before the zephyr, to that side inclined
Where shadows from the mountain first appear.
Yet were they not so bent before the breeze, 13
But that the little birds in many a throng
Their several arts pursued amid the trees;
And, full of gladness, as they poured their throats,
Hailed the sweet hours of prime, those leaves among
Which kept harmonious murmur with their notes;
Even such a murmur as from tree to tree 19
Runs through the piny grove on Chiassi's shore,
When Æolus hath set Sirocco free
Now had I tardily advanced such space
Within that ancient forest, that no more
The point where I had entered could I trace.
And lo, a stream my further course denied, 25
Which, on the left hand, with its little wave
Bent down the herbage springing at its side.
All waters here on earth most pure and bright
Some mixture in them would appear to have,
Compared with this, concealing nought from sight.
And yet it moved in darkness on its way, 31
Dark, in the depth of that perpetual shade
Which sun nor moon e'er pierced with entering ray.
I checked my steps, and travelled with mine eye
Across the stream, to view the trees arrayed
In all their fresh and rich variety.
And there appeared to me (as, sudden brought 37
To view, some startling object has the power
Through wonder to divert each other thought)
A lady all alone; who roved about
Singing, as she selected flower from flower,
With which her pathway painted was throughout,
"O beauteous lady, who full surely art 43
Irradiate with the fire of love's own beam,

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20. "On the shore of the Adriatic, near Ravenna, formerly stood Chiassi, or Classe, now destroyed. The grove of pines still exists."—Lombardi. 25. The river Lethe. See lines 127, 130. 40. Matelda See Canto xxxiii. 119. She is supposed to be so named in honour of the Countess Matelda, who left large estates to the Church.

If I may trust those signs that speak the heart,
Be it thy pleasure to approach so near,"
I thus addressed her, "tow'rds this pleasant stream,
That I the purport of thy song may hear.
Fair Proserpine thou to my mind dost bring, 49
And that most beauteous meadow where she roved,
When by her mother lost, she lost the spring."
Like to a lady turning in the dance,
Foot before foot from earth so slightly moved,
That scarce perceptible is her advance.—
So 'mid those flow'rets of the richest dyes, 55
Crimson and gold, to me she turned around,
Like virgin fair who veils her modest eyes,
And by her presence satisfied my prayer;—
Approaching me so near, that with the sound,
I caught the meaning of her heavenly air.
Reaching a spot where now the herbage green 61
Was watered by that clear perennial stream,
Gracious she raised on me her lovely eyne,
So radiant—that when Venus felt the blow
Her son inflicted unawares, I deem
Flashed not her eyes with such celestial glow.
From the right bank on me a smile she threw, 67
Scattering more flow'rets from her gentle hands,
Which in that lofty realm spontaneous grew.
The stream between us ran three paces wide;
But not the Hellespont, which Xerxes' bands
Opposed,—for the restraint of human pride—
Was by Leander with more hatred viewed, 73
'Twixt Sestos and Abydos deeply flowing—
Than this, which my impatient step withstood.
"Strangers are ye," she thus her speech began;
"And it may be, unto my smiles 'tis owing,
That in this place, the chosen nest of man,
Somewhat of doubt and wonder fills your mind; 79
But let the psalm, 'Thou makest me glad, O Lord,'

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49. Explained by Lombardi to mean the "perpetuum ver" of Ovid, *i.e.* the verdant region from which she was snatched by Pluto. See Milton. Par. Lost, iv. 268. 64. When Venus was enamoured of Adonis. 80. "For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy works, and I will rejoice in giving praise for the operations of thy hands."—Psalm xcii. 4. "This, my song," she says, "will enable you to perceive the reason of my

Remove the cloud that doth your reason blind.
And thou in front, who didst entreat me—say
If aught to inform thee else I may afford;
For prompt I came, thy doubts to clear away."
"This stream," I answered, "and this leafy sound,
With what I lately heard both disagree;
And the discordance doth my mind confound."
"The reason of thy wonderment," she said,
"More fully will I now relate to thee,
And clear this mist that is around thee spread.
The Good Supreme, who in himself alone
Delighteth, made man good, and gave this place
A pledge of endless peace:—the fault his own,
If in such blessed realm his stay was short,—
Choosing a life of sorrow and disgrace,
Instead of virtuous smiles and gladsome sport.
That all the changes which arise below,
Through exhalations of the land or sea,
Which tow'rds the sun continually flow,
Might not disturbance here to man create,
High is the mountain reared, and hence is free
From change, within the limits of the gate.
Now, since the air all moves in circling course,
Obedient to the primal impulse given,
Unless restrained in part by casual force;
Thus doth the living air that flows around
This lofty region, in strong current driven,
Run through the leafy wood with murmuring sound.
Thence a new power derive the wafted leaves;
And this, imparted to the circling breeze,
On all sides round is carried:—hence conceives,
By powerful influence wrought, the nether earth;
And, as the soil and clime dispose, to trees
Of various kind and quality gives birth.
The fact explained—thou shouldst not marvel then,

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smile; *viz.*, the delight I take in beholding the works of God in this terrestrial Paradise." 87. Dante had been informed by Statius that the mountain of Purgatory was subject to no changes such as arise from wind, &c. See xxi. 43. The answer is given, line 97. 91. God, "the Supreme Good," is said to delight in himself alone, *i. e.* in goodness, of which he is the perfection. See Par. xxxiii. 124. 93. See Milton, Par. Lost, iii. 96. 103. Matelda proceeds to explain why the leaves of the forest were in motion.

If some new plant in future there take root,
Whose seed may not appear to human ken:
For know, the sacred ground on which we stand
Bears plants spontaneous, and each sort of fruit,
Not plucked from trees that grow in yonder land.—
The streams thou seest spring not from earthly vein, 121
Supplied by mists that reconverted fall,
Like rill that spent renews its strength again;
But issue from a never-failing source,
Replenished by the will of God with all
They pour on either side along their course:
On this hand, able—such the power assigned— 127
To take away the memory of sin;
On that—to call each virtuous deed to mind:
This, Lethe named—that Eunöe:—but until
The streams on either hand have tasted been,
They fail their proper object to fulfil.
All other flavours this doth far excel; 133
And though no more I should explain to thee,
Thy former thirst may sated be full well.
A corollary will I add beside;
Nor will my words, I deem, less pleasing be,
Should more than I have promised be supplied.
The bards, whose fabling verse in ancient time 139
Painted the age of gold, the state of bliss,
Dreamt in Parnassus of this heavenly clime;
For here man's race was innocent;—here spring
Perpetual blooms, with every fruit,—and this
The nectar of whose praise all poets sing."
Around I turned again to either bard, 145
And in their countenances saw betrayed
The smile with which her closing words they heard;
Then bent my sight upon the beauteous maid.

CANTO XXIX.

ARGUMENT.

The poet keeps pace with Matelda along the opposite bank of the river Lethe. The forest is illuminated by a sudden flash, and a delicious melody is heard. A procession follows, in which a triumphal car is drawn by a griffin.

As though by love inspired—her heavenly lay 1
To its last cadence sang that Lady fair;

"Blessed are those whose sins are washed away:"
And like to nymphs advancing one by one
Along the sylvan shade—with studious care,
Some to avoid, and some to meet the sun;
So she against the river upward went, 7
Following the bank; while I with her kept pace,—
By her short step to measure mine intent.
Not fifty paces had we made our way,
When both the banks took such a turn—my face
Caught the reflection of the eastern ray.
Nor had we far at equal distance sped, 13
When in a moment turning round to me,
"Look, brother, look, and hear," the Lady said.
And lo! shot suddenly throughout the wood
A flash of such surpassing brilliancy,
Methought it must be lightning that I viewed.
But because lightning with the speed it came, 19
Departs, while this grew more and more intense,
"What can it be?" I to myself exclaim.
Then through the glowing air was sweetly sent
A strain, so ravishing to mortal sense,
It made me Eve's audacity lament;—
That when both heaven and earth obedient were, 25
Woman alone, and she but just created,
Refused the veil of ignorance to bear;
To which had she submitted patiently,
O how extended, how much antedated
Had been these joys ineffable! While I
Was wandering such primæval fruits among 31
Of the Eternal Love, in thought profound,
And on the hope of further pleasures hung;—
Before us, 'neath the verdant boughs appeared
The air on fire; and what seemed first a sound,
Distinctly now in sweetest songs was heard.
O holy Virgins, for your sake if I 37
Have ever suffered hunger, watching, cold,
Now grant your aid in my necessity.
Through me let Helicona pour her springs;
And may Urania's choir divine unfold
Verse suited to my high imaginings.
A little in advance I seemed to view 43
Seven trees of gold, which at such distance lay,

That though unreal, they appeared as true.
But when I came so near, that I could trace
The form whose general semblance led astray,
(Its lineaments no more obscured by space)—
That power which unto reason speech supplies 49
Seven candelabra recognized, and e'en
Could hear the strain "Hosanna."—On mine eyes
That object fair shone brighter than the moon,
When through the silence of the blue serene
She walks at midnight in her highest noon.
With an admiring and astonished gaze 55
I turned to Virgil; and the bard replied
By look no less o'erburden'd with amaze.
These glorious things I then again survey,
Which moved so slowly tow'rds us that a bride
Had e'en outstripped them on her nuptial day.
The Lady cried to me: "Why is thy mind 61
So wholly on those living lustres stayed,
That thou regardest not what comes behind?"
They seemed to be the leaders of a band
That closely followed them, in white arrayed;—
Such whiteness never seen in mortal land.
The water sparkled with the living beam, 67
And on the left, as in a mirror, gave
My form reflected in the glassy stream.
When onward to a distant spot I drew,
Where nought divided us except the wave,
I checked my steps to gain a clearer view;
And saw the flames, advancing, leave the air 73
Painted behind them; and they seemed to glide

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50. What, at a distance, first appeared "a flash of lightning," (line 16,) and as if "the air was on fire," (line 35,) then, "seven trees of gold," (line 44,) on Dante's approaching still nearer, turns out to be seven candelabra. "And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven spirits of God." Rev. iv. 5. They are also called "flames," line 73. 51. Indication of our Saviour's approach, line 107. 65. "And one of the elders answered, saying unto me: What are these which are arrayed in white robes?..and he said unto me: These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." Rev. vii. 13, 14, 15.

As if e'en banners drawn along they were:
So that seven streaks remained above, which shone
With the same colours all diversified,
Whence Phœbus' bow is form'd, and Delia's zone.
Those streamers further than mine eye could reach 79
Were floating; and, to judge of the outer two,
Ten paces separated each from each.
Under so beautiful a canopy
Twenty-four elders then approached in view,
By pairs, their temples crowned with fleur-de-lis.
"O blessed, thou," they sang, "above the rest 85
Of Adam's daughters! thou who art endued
With beauty, mayst thou evermore be blest!"
Soon as the flowerets and cool herbs, that decked
The bank opposed to that on which I stood,
Were cleared of that most holy troop elect;
As light in heaven succeeds to light, so now 91
Four animals succeeded to them close;
And round their heads each wore a verdant bough.
Each with six wings was plumed; and every plume
Was full of eyes—such eyes as would be those
Of Argus, could they life again assume.
To paint their form, more rhymes I may not spare; 97
For other matter urges me—so strong,
That on this subject I must needs forbear.
But read Ezekiel, who describes their course,

75. See Monti, Proposta, in voce Pennello. 78. "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." Ezekiel i. 28. 83. "And round about the throne were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment," &c. Rev. iv. 4; see also v. 8, 9; xi. 16, 17. They are said to represent the twenty-four books of the Old Testament. 94. The four beasts or cherubim of Ezekiel and St. John.—"And their whole body, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels were full of eyes round about" Ezekiel x. 12. "And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within; and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come." Rev. iv. 8. 100. "And I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire unfolding itself ....and out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures." Ezekiel i. 4, 5.

As from the north he saw them come along,
With cloud, and fire, and whirlwind's sweeping force :
And such was their appearance here, as he
Describes them, save the pinions—these St. John
Makes somewhat different, and agrees with me.
The space within the four a car contained.
Which to a Griffon's neck attached, moved on,
By two triumphal wheels aloft sustained.
Upward between the central band and those
On each side, three, his either wing he reared;
And from the flapping thus no harm arose.
So high they mounted that they baffled sight :
His limbs were gold as far as he was bird;
And, with vermilion mixed, the rest were white.
Not Rome her Africanus e'er adorned,
Or her Augustus, with a car so fair;
And e'en the sun's, compared with it, were scorned : —
That, which, borne headlong from its customed road,
Was erst consumed at Terra's fervent prayer,
When Jove mysteriously his justice showed.
At the right wheel in circling dance there came
Three damsels ;—one, so ruddy, that, to view,
She scarce had been distinguished amid flame.
The second's flesh and bone appeared as though
Of emeralds they were fashioned ; and in hue
The third was like to newly driven snow.
The white now took the lead, and now the red;
The rest meanwhile kept measure with her song,
Or swift or slow, as one or other led.
All festive on the left danced other four,
In purple clad, at beck of one among
The band, who three eyes in her forehead bore.
Close in the rear of these, I now descried
Two aged men in different garbs arrayed;

106. The chair of St. Peter, surrounded by the four evangelists. 107. The Griffon is a symbol of the two natures of Jesus Christ. 108. The two wheels are the Old and New Testament. 122. *i. e.* Charity, glowing like a flame. 124. Hope, green as an emerald. 125. Faith, white as driven snow. 130. The four cardinal virtues —Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Courage.

But like in manner—grave and dignified.
One seemed as if he a disciple were
Of great Hippocrates, whom Nature made
For sake of those she holds on earth most dear:
Quite opposite the other's aim appeared,
With sharp and shining sword; and though I stood
On this side of the stream, I greatly feared.
Then saw I four approach of humble guise;
And in their rear an aged man I viewed,
Who, rapt in vision, seemed to close his eyes.
And like the four and twenty were arrayed
The latter seven, save that by these were worn
Roses, and other vermeil flowers, (instead
Of lilies) which their foreheads so became,
That one at little distance would have sworn
Their heads above the brow were wrapt in flame.
And when the car was opposite, a sound
Of thunder struck me; and this worthy band
Seemed in their course by some obstruction bound;
And with the first bright ensigns took their stand.

CANTO XXX.

ARGUMENT.

Beatrice descends from heaven, and at her coming Virgil disappears. Placing herself in the celestial car, she reproves Dante. Then, addressing the angels, she laments that after her death he had forgotten her.

When the septentrion of that heaven sublime,
Which neither set nor rise hath ever known,
Nor veil of other cloud save that of crime,
(And which e'en now was pointing out to each

136. St. Luke the physician, likened to the celebrated physician Hippocrates. 139. St. Paul, represented with a sword. 142. Supposed to be the authors of the epistles,—*i. e.* James, Peter, John, and Jude. 143. St. John, who is rapt in vision, as being the author of the Revelation, written when he was near ninety. 154. *i. e.* With the candelabra before mentioned.

1. *i. e.* The before-mentioned candelabra—so called after the seven stars of the Ursa Major, visible in our heaven; and here said to guide Christians, as the polar star guides mariners. Thus the septentrion or candelabra represent the Holy Spirit.

The road of duty, like the lower one
That tells the Pilot how the port to reach)
Was firmly fixed—anon those spirits blest, 7
Who 'twixt it and the Griffon stood at first,
Turned to the car, as to their place of rest;
And lo! a voice—"Come, Spouse from Lebanon,"
As though from heavenly messenger, outburst,
And all the choir to join that prelude won.
At the last summons as the just shall rise 13
Each from his cavern, and, with voice again
Endued, sing Hallelujahs;—in like guise,
Obedient to such holy mandate given,
On the celestial chariot sprang amain
A hundred angel ministers of heaven.
"O Blessed thou who comest," they all cried; 19
"Scatter we lilies with unsparing hand;"
And flowers the while they threw on every side.
Erewhile the eastern regions have I seen
At break of day with roseate hues expand,
The expanse beside all beauteous and serene;
And the sun's face so shrouded at its rise, 25
And tempered by the mists which overhung,
That I could gaze on it with stedfast eyes;—
E'en so, encompassed in a cloud of flowers,
Which upward by angelic hands were flung,
And all about the chariot fell in showers—
In veil of white, with olive chaplet bound, 31
A maid appeared beneath a mantle green,
With hue of living flame enrobed around.
And now my spirit (which for many a day,
Unused to feel her presence, had not been
O'ermastered by sensations of dismay,)

11. "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon." Song of Solomon, iv. 8. "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come." Rev. xxii. 17. "And I, John, saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband." Rev. xxi. 2. Beatrice is the mystical church—the New Jerusalem, or Bride of the Scriptures. 13. The reading "voce" is adopted. 16. The "mandate given" is that of the Angelic Messenger, line 10,—who, exclaiming, "Come, spouse from Lebanon," gave the note of preparation for the arrival of Beatrice. 20. "Manibus date lilia plenis." Æn. vi. 884. 31. Beatrice—who had been dead ten years.



DANTE, WEEP NOT THAT VIRGIL LEAVES THEE, NAY, WEEP NOT AS YET.

Felt, though she was not fully manifest, 37
(Such secret virtue from her person flowed)
How strong the love that erst my soul possessed.
Soon as mine eye perceived that glorious ray,
With which in former times my bosom glowed,
Ere boyhood yet had wholly passed away,
I turned me to the left,—e'en like a child, 43
That to its mother runs with panting breast,
When scared, or into dangerous paths beguiled—
To say to Virgil: "Flows not through my frame
One drop of blood that trembles not: confest
Are all the traces of my ancient flame."
But Virgil now had vanished from my side— 49
Virgil—my father, most revered, most dear—
Virgil—on whom for safety I relied.
Nor could the sight of all in evil hour
Lost by our primal mother, check the tear,
Which o'er my cheeks now flowed in ample shower.
"Dante, weep not that Virgil leaves thee, no— 55
Weep not as yet; behold, another sword,
Of sharper edge shall cause thy tears to flow."
E'en as an Admiral with searching ken
Inspects his vessels when he comes a-board,
And by his look encourages his men;
So on the left of the celestial car, 61
(When at the sound of mine own name I turned,
Which here I am compelled to register)
The lady, whom beneath a drapery
Of flowers angelical I late discerned,
Cast from beyond the stream her eyes on me:
Although the veil, that from her brow descended, 67
Girt by Minerva's leaf around her head,
From clearer view her beauteous form defended.
With regal air, and look, wherein disdain
Was pictured still, proceeding thus, she said,
(Like one who doth her bitterest taunt retain)
"Yes, I am Beatrice; regard me well:— 73
And hast thou deigned at last to ascend the mount,

48. "Agnosco veteris vestigia flammæ." Æn. iv. 23. 55. This is the only occasion throughout the whole poem in which Dante mentions his own name. See line 63.

Where joys unspeakable for ever dwell?"
In the clear water fell mine eyesight now;
But imaged there, I turned me from the fount:
Shame so oppressive settled on my brow.
And as the mother to the son appears
Haughty—thus haughty she appeared to me:
Since sharp the flavour, harsh compassion bears.
She ceased: when sudden the angelic throng
Chaunted; "My hope, O Lord, hath been in thee:"
But with "my feet," concluded they their song.
As snow congeals upon the living masts
Along Italia's ridge, when blown upon
And hardened by the strong Sclavonian blasts—
Then melting, runs into itself once more,
Like wax before a flame dissolved anon,
When breathes the gale from Afric's ardent shore;
Thus stood I, unrelieved by sighs or tears,
Till came the notes of those unto mine aid,
Who sing in concert with the eternal spheres.
But when I heard in their sweet measures flow
More pity than if even they had said,
"Wherefore, O lady, dost thou grieve him so?"
The ice dissolved, which girt my heart around,
And, gushing forth, from out my eyes and breast,
In tears and sighs a painful passage found.
She firmly standing then upon the right
Of the celestial car, her speech addressed
To those most holy substances of light.
"Ye keep your vigils in the eternal day,
So that nor night nor sleep may from you steal
One step the passing age makes on its way:
Whence I more carefully my answer frame,
That he who weeps on yonder bank may feel
A punishment assorted to his shame.

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83. They sing the 31st Psalm, "In te, Domine, speravi," Psalm 31, as far as the 8th verse, ending "statuisti in loco spatioso pedes meos." 85. "Living masts," mean leafless woods. 90. "Should that land but breathe where the shadow is lost"—meaning Africa, where, under the equator, scarcely any shadow is cast. 93. *i. e.* the Angels. 103. *i. e.* "Ye look into that eternal Mirror, where all times are present, so that ye are not subject, like mortals, to lose sight of passing events through the necessity of sleep."

Not only through those mighty wheels' effect, 109
That, subject unto planetary power,
Each seed unto a certain end direct;
But through the bounty of celestial graces,
Which vapours of such lofty influence shower,
Our eyesight fails on earth to mark their traces;
So gifted in his early life was he, 115
Each virtuous germ, implanted in him, would
Have flourished in a marvellous degree:
But soil untilled and sown with noxious seed,
The more with native vigour 'tis endued,
The more malignant yields the noxious weed.
Long time my look sustained him:—to his sight 121
The lustre of my youthful eyes displaying,
I led him with me in the path of right.
Scarce had I reached life's second state, when he
Betook himself to others—rashly straying
From better guidance, and forgetting me.
Soon as from earth my soul had winged her flight 127
With beauty and with virtue more endued,
Less dear was I, less pleasing in his sight.
His steps he turned into an erring way,
Pursuing false appearances of good,
Which promise fair, but ever lead astray.
Nor inspirations asked for him availed, 133
By which in dreams I fain would him recall;
Such slight regard he paid them:—wholly failed
The means I often used (so low he fell)
To ensure his safety and redeem his fall,
Save leading him throughout the rounds of Hell.
Hence went I to the entrance of the dead, 139
Imploring one his guidance to essay
With many prayers, and tears profusely shed.
God's high decree had been infringed, if he

109. *i. e.* Through the influence of the heavens, which direct every one to some good or bad aim, according to the constellation under which he is born, &c. See Inf. xv. 56. and xxvi. 24. 132. "The false traitors promise to remove every thirst, and every want, and to bring sufficiency and abundance: but in lieu of refreshment they bring a feverish and intolerable thirst." Convito. Trat. iv. 12. 139. See Inf. ii. 53; where Beatrice came down to Limbo, "the entrance of the dead," and implored the aid of Virgil for her friend.

Had passed and tasted Lethe on his way,
Unless he suffered first the penalty,
Which tears and a sincere repentance pay."

CANTO XXXI.

ARGUMENT.

Beatrice again directs her discourse to Dante. Her reproofs cause him to swoon and fall to the ground. When restored to himself, he is dipped by Matelda in the waters of the river Lethe, and drawn to the other bank. Beatrice re-appears.

"Thou whom beyond the sacred stream I see,"— 1
Thus quickly she began her speech anew,
Turning forthwith its point direct on me,
Although full sharp the side alone had seemed,—
"Answer me; is this accusation true?
By free confession be the fault redeemed."
Confusion so o'erwhelmed me at the sound, 7
The words expired within my lips, ere they
Had through the organs their expression found.
Awhile she paused; then uttered: "Answer me,
For not yet hath the water washed away
The mournful traces from thy memory."
Fear and confusion, mixt together, drew 13
Forth from my lips an answering "yes," so faint,
That to perceive it, sight was needed too.
As breaks a bow before the arrow flies,
When both the wood and cord are overbent,
And to the mark the shaft more feebly hies;
So I beneath this heavy burden quailed, 19
Pouring forth sighs and tears, a bitter flood;
And, ere the words had reached my lips, they failed.
Whence she resumed: "To thwart those high desires
Instilled by me, which bade thee love that Good,
Noblest to which the soul of man aspires—
What interposing trenches didst thou find, 25
What chains,—that thus, foregoing liberty,
All hope of further progress was resigned?
And what attraction, what advantages

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1. Beatrice addresses Dante, when she was beyond Lethe, the river of oblivion. See line 11.

In other foreheads were perceived by thee,
That taught thee those to woo instead of these?"
After the drawing of a bitter sigh, 31
My lips with difficulty answer made,
And scarce had power to fashion a reply.
Weeping, I said: "My steps were turned aside
By the false pleasure present things displayed,
Soon as your face was to my view denied."
"Hadst thou been silent, or refused to own 37
Thy fault," she said, "our knowledge would have reached
That fault, by One omniscient clearly known.
When tears however, gushing forth, allege
The conscious sinner, by himself impeached,
In this our court the wheel rebates the edge:
But that more shame may expiate thy crime, 43
And with more strength thy spirit may be fraught,
Listening the Syren's voice another time,—
Dismiss the cause of tears, and hear from me,
What different effect should have been wrought
By the announcement of my death to thee.
No lure to equal those fair limbs of mine, 49
Now unto dust returned, did ever art,
Or nature, to attract thine eyes, design:
And if with charm of such supreme delight
Thy doom it was, at my decease, to part,
What mortal thing should have allured thy sight?
At the first shaft which struck thee from the bow 55
Of treacherous things, thou shouldest have soared above,
Pursuing me, not frail, as when below.
Became thee not to stoop thy wing to earth
To wait fresh snares—some youthful maiden's love,
Or other vanity of equal worth.
Though the young bird may twice or thrice forget, 61
Yet in the view of those full-plumed, his aim
The fowler takes in vain, or spreads his net."
As little children, with their eyes bent low,
Stand listening—mute, through consciousness of shame,
Convicted and repentant;—even so

---

42. Divine Mercy blunts the sword of vengeance. 61. By this proverb Beatrice exemplifies the folly of a man of mature age reverting to earthly pleasures. Hence the irony of telling him to "raise his beard," line 68.

I stood; and she resumed: "Since but to hear 67
Afflicts thee, raise thy beard, and let thine eyes
Witness a cause of sorrow more severe."—
With less resistance by the root is torn
Some sturdy oak, when northern blasts arise,
Or those from Afric's land, impetuous borne,
Than lifted I my chin, as she directed;
For when instead of "face" she said my "beard,"
I knew the venom that her speech infected:
And, stretching out my face, beheld those fair
Primæval creatures, which before appeared,
Cease from the sprinkling of the flowers they bare.
And I, though scarcely was restored my sight, 79
Saw Beatrice admire that Form Divine,
Which in itself two natures doth unite.
On the green bank—her veil around her cast—
She seemed still more her former self to outshine,
Than, while on earth, all others she surpast.
Repentant stings so struggled in my soul, 85
I contemplated now with hate and shame
All that had swayed me with supreme control.
Such keen remorse was kindled in my breast,
I swoon'd away; and what I then became
She knows, whose mighty presence I confessed.
Soon as my heart fresh vigour had supplied, 91
The Lady, whom before I found alone,
I saw above me;—"Hold—keep hold," she cried;
Then drew me to the stream; and as she bore
My sinking form, her way she quickly won,
Light as a shuttle, that dark water o'er.
Nearing the sacred bank—came on mine ear 97
"Asperges me" in strain so passing sweet,
Recall I cannot, much less write it here.
The beauteous lady straight, her arms extending,
Embraced my head, and plunged me where 'twas meet
That I should taste the wave;—then, lowly bending,
She raised me up, and offered me, so laved, 103

77. *i. e.* **The Angels—who (canto xxx. 20.) were scattering flowers around Beatrice. 92. Matelda. See canto xxviii. 37. 98. "Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Psalm li. 7.**

Within the circle of the Maids benign,
Who, as they danced, their arms around me waved.
"Nymphs are we here below, and stars in heaven:
To Beatrice, ere from her seat divine
She hither came, were we for handmaids given.
We to her eyes will lead thee;—but to bear
The joyous light within, shall yonder three,
Profound of ken, thy visual sense prepare."
Singing melodiously, commenced they thus;
Then to the Griffon's breast conducted me,
Where Beatrice was standing, turned to us.
"Now satisfy," they said, "thy anxious view;—
Thee have we placed before the emeralds bright,
Whence Love erewhile his shafts against thee drew."
A thousand longings more intense than fire
Mine eyes attracted to those eyes of light,
Fixt on the Griffon with profound desire:
And in them, like unto the sun pourtrayed
Within a glass, the two-fold thing was beaming—
His either nature there by turns displayed.
Think, reader, what surprise was mine, to see
An object, in itself so tranquil seeming,
Bear in its image such diversity.
Whilst, filled with deepest wonder and delight,
My soul was tasting of that heavenly food,
Which, satisfying, wakes new appetite,
The other three irradiate forms advance:
How great their rank their high demeanour showed;
And songs accompanied their angel dance.
"Turn, Beatrice, O turn" (this was their song)
"Thy holy eyes unto thy faithful one,
Who hath, to view thee, made such journey long.
Do thou at our entreaty here reveal
Thy smile to him, and make thy beauty known—
That second beauty thou dost now conceal."
O splendour of eternal living light!

104. The four cardinal virtues—stars in heaven till they accompanied Beatrice on her descent from heaven. See canto i. 23; and xxix. 130. They conduct Dante to the Griffon. See canto xxix. 107. **116.** The eyes of Beatrice. **123.** In her eyes the Griffon is reflected, alternately displaying the human nature and the divine.

Who, though grown pale beneath Parnassus' shade,
Or wont to quaff the rills from that fair height,
Would not betray the mental strain, should he
Attempt to picture thee, thou peerless Maid,
When, compassed with celestial harmony,
Thou in unshrouded beauty wert displayed?

CANTO XXXII.

ARGUMENT.

Dante, in company with Matelda and Statius, follows the procession of the blest to the tree of knowledge. After a hymn. Dante falls asleep, and is awakened by a flash of splendour. Beatrice tells him to observe the car, and, on his return to earth, to record all he sees.

Bent were mine eyes with ardour so intense
To sate their ten years' thirst, that all the while
Lost in oblivion was each other sense:—
On either side of them a wall was set,
To exclude ought else; so did that sacred smile
Again enthral them with its ancient net;
When towards the left my looks were forcibly
Diverted by those Nymphs, on hearing one
Exclaim, addressing me; "Too earnestly:"
And a sensation of o'erpowering light,
As when the eyes are dazzled by the sun,
Deprived me for some moments of my sight.
But when my vision was in part renewed,
So that mine eyes were able to discern
Objects less splendid than those lately viewed,
I saw that on the right that glorious host
Had wheeled around; and, making now a turn,
Before the flames and sun took up their post.
E'en as a troop, beneath their bucklers ranged

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140. Dante acknowledges his inability to describe Beatrice, although an indefatigable votary of the Muses.

2. "The descent of Dante into hell was feigned to be in 1300..... Beatrice died in 1290. Therefore the ten years' thirst of Dante, signifies the desire he had for ten years felt to see her again." Monti, Proposta, in voce, Decenne. **8.** The theological virtues. They reprove Dante for his too intense contemplation of Beatrice. **18.** *i. e.* In front of the candelabra.

For greater safety, turn on either hand,
Ere their direction can be wholly changed;
So now, of that celestial armament
Passed onward in like guise the leading band,
Ere the triumphal car its beam had bent.
Then to the wheels those Nymphs themselves betaking,
The Griffon moved his blessed burden thence, 26
Although so gently, not a plume was shaking.
The beauteous maid who drew me o'er the tide
Followed the wheel of less circumference,
By Statius and myself accompanied.
As thus we passed throughout the lofty wood, 31
Void through the fault of Eve, in unison
With angel notes our journey we pursued.
About the distance that an arrow, thrice
Loosed from the string, might compass, had we gone,
When from the car descended Beatrice.
Then "Adam" muttered all in accents low; 37
And in a circle round a tree they went,
Stript of each leaf, without a flower to show.
Its head, which, as it rises, doth dilate
The more, so lofty grows, that wonderment
In Indians 'mid their groves it would create.
"Blessed, O Griffon! art thou not to rend 43
This tree, which needs must be surpassing sweet,
Since it allured our Parents to offend."
Thus cried they, as they circled round the tree;
And He in whom the twofold natures meet;
"Yea, so fulfilled all righteousness must be."
Then to the chariot's beam straight turning round, 49

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32. Eden is called "void," as uninhabited since the expulsion of our first parents, though remaining in its original beauty. 37. "O thou Adam, what hast thou done? for though it was thou that sinned, thou art not fallen alone, but we all that come of thee." 2 Esdras vii. 48. 43. The Griffon (Christ) obeys—does not partake the fruit—therefore blessed. 39. The tree is bare—"bereft of spray" (line 50), through the crime of Eve; *i. e.* mankind before the Christian dispensation,—no life in it, dead. 49. The chariot is the Church, of which Christ is the founder. When it is bound to the tree, the tree revives. This is the new dispensation. "When Christ by his incarnation had restored the human race and reconciled them to God, the tree recovered its foliage. Whence this is the figure of the incarnation of Christ."

He drew it to the tree bereft of spray,
And left it, by a twig together bound.
As, when from heaven descends the glorious light,
Mingled with that which when the Pisces' ray
Departs, beams forth with more effective might,—
Our plants swell out, and re-enlivened are 55
With its own hues, or ere the sun unite
His fiery steeds beneath some other star;
With tints less vivid than the rose, but more
Deep than the violet, was that plant now dight,
Which of its foliage was so stript before.
The words they sang I could not comprehend; 61
For not to earth belonged their melodies;
Nor did I hear their notes unto the end.
Could I but sing how heavy slumber weighed,
At tale of Syrinx' woe, the unpitying eyes,
That dearly for their high distinction paid,
Like one who from a model draws, might I 67
Depict the manner of my slumber deep;
But to describe it, whoso will, may try.
Passing to when I woke, hence tell I, how
A flash of splendour burst the veil of sleep,
A voice too, crying: "Rise; what doest thou?"
As (led to view the flowerets of that tree 73
For whose delicious fruit the Angels pine,
In heaven a source of ceaseless jubilee,)
Turned back the Apostles Peter, James and John,
From sleep awakened at the Word divine,
By which had deeper sleep been overthrown;
And witnessed straight their little band grow less— 79

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52. When the sun enters Aries, which succeeds the Pisces. 58. The crucifixion is supposed to be here alluded to in the colour of the water and blood. 65. Her misfortunes formed the subject of the song by which Mercury lulled to sleep the hundred-eyed Argus appointed by Juno to watch Io. 72. The transfiguration is alluded to: "Arise; and be not afraid." Matt. xvii. 7. 73. "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons." Solomon's Song ii. 3. For its fruit the Angels are said to pine, in allusion to 1st Peter i. 12— "Which things the Angels desire to look into." 77. Dante supposes the Apostles to have been awakened by the voice out of the cloud: "This is my beloved Son; hear him." 78. *i. e.* That of Lazarus and Jarius's daughter.

Moses departed, and Elias too—
And their great Master altered in his dress;—
So I awakening, roused me from my dream,
And saw that pitying Maid stand o'er me, who
Had led my steps along the sacred stream.
And, "Where is Beatrice?" in doubt I cried. 85
"Beneath the new-born leaves behold her there,
Upon the root reclining," she replied;
"Behold the maidens who her form surround:
Following the Griffon, mount the rest in air
With sweeter minstrelsy and more profound."
Whether to greater length her words were brought 91
I know not, since before mine eyes was She
Who barred the entrance to each other thought.
Alone she sate upon the quickened ground,
As though the car were in her custody,
Which there the twofold animal had bound.
Into a circle formed themselves anon 97
The Nymphs, those lights supporting in their hands
Which Auster quencheth not, or Aquilon.—
"Brief space this forest shall thy dwelling be;
And in that Rome where Christ himself commands
Shalt thou be fellow-citizen with me.
Whence, that the evil world some good may learn, 103
Look on the car, and all that meets thine eye
Forget not to record, on thy return."
These words spake Beatrice; and I, resigned
To execute her will implicitly,
E'en as she bade, applied my eyes and mind.
Ne'er from thick cloud, by force ethereal riven, 109

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87. Beatrice, with her handmaids, the three theological virtues, takes her seat under the tree which had lately been renovated. 89. The Griffon, with the Angels, flies up into heaven. 95. During his absence Beatrice watches over the Church. 98. The seven candelabra, mentioned xxix. 44, which, representing "the seven lamps or Spirits of God," are secure from disturbance of winds. 101. Beatrice informs Dante that after death he should dwell for ever with her "in that Rome of which Christ is citizen," *i. e.* in Zion, the eternal city. 103. Dante is here admonished to bear record, on his return to earth, of the state of the Church. Accordingly the remainder of the Purgatorio is mainly occupied with a vision drawn from St. John. See conclusion of the Introduction.

With such velocity was lightning sent,
When falling from the farthest bound of heaven;
As down the bird of Jove impetuous flew
Straight through the tree, by which the bark was rent
Much more the tender boughs and foliage new.
He struck the car with all his force, whereat 115
It quailed like vessel tempest tost, and driven
Now by the waves on this side, now on that.
Then up into the vehicle I viewed
A she-fox leap, to greediness so given,
She seemed rapacious of all goodly food.
But chiding her for this unseemly deed 121
My Lady put her to such rapid flight,
Her skinny bones could scarce endure the speed.
Then from the quarter whence he came before,
The Eagle swooped into the chariot bright,
And left it with his feathers covered o'er.
And such a voice as issues from a heart 127
Grief stricken, came from heaven; and thus it said:
"Oh, how ill freighted, little bark thou art!"
Then seemed it that the earth did gape betwixt
The wheels; and thence in sight a Dragon sped,
Which, turning up its tail, the car transfixed.
And like a wasp that draweth back its sting, 133
So, drawing back his venomed tail, he rent
Part of the car, and fled with joyous wing.
And as the earth with herbage is renewed,
So the remainder an integument
Formed of the feathers,—with intention good
Haply presented; and as rapidly 139

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112. The Empire, typified by the eagle, first persecutes the Church. 119. The she-fox appears to be the same as the she-wolf of the Inferno—so similar is the description. See canto i. 98. 125. The Empire, which first persecuted the Church, now befriends it. The feathers are the fatal dowry of Constantine. See extracts from Dante's Prose works, appended to "The Spirit of Dante." 129. The bark is the Church, injured by the said dowry, and is "falling into the mire with all her freight." See canto xvi. 127. 131. "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red Dragon having seven heads and ten horns, &c." Rev. xii. 3. This text was quoted by Frederick II. in reply to Gregory IX., who accused him of blasphemy for saying, "Papam esse belluam de quâ scriptum est, 'Et exivit,' &c." and adding "Ipse est Draco magnus qui seducit universum mundum, Antichristus."

Were both the pole and wheels therewith o'erspread,
As tne lips open to express a sigh.
The sacred Structure, thus diversified,
Through every part of it put forth a head;
Three at the pole, and one on either side.
Horns the first three, like unto oxen, bore;
One single horn the four among them reared;
Nor was such monster ever seen before.
Firm as a rock upon some mountain high,
A wanton harlot, seated there, appeared,
Who threw on every side a wandering eye:
And lest she should be carried from that height,
A giant sitting close to her I viewed;
And oft they kissed each other in my sight.
But when with mine her roving eyes did meet,
Her dread companion lashed her in fierce mood,
E'en from the head unto the very feet.
Then did he loose the beast, with anger keen
Incensed, and through the wood such distance drew,

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142. The car or Papacy having been again enriched (line 138) by imperial donations, is wholly transformed, and becomes a very "monster." 145. "And I saw a beast rise up out of the sea having seven heads and ten horns." Rev. xiii. 1. 149. "Some would have it that this harlot means the court of Rome, adopting what is presently afterwards said in Rev. xviii. 2; 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her.' And of this the author had experience in the time of Pope Boniface VIII. when he went as ambassador for the Republic; so that he knew with what sort of eyes he looked, and what sort of a paramour Boniface was—not her legitimate spouse, according to the opinion of many God knows the truth. The author, however, treats of this subject here and in the nineteenth of the Inferno." Ottimo Commento. 152. "Here, in the giant, every one recognises Philip le bel—if not in the harlot, the Church of Rome,....espoused to few who have not sold her to adulterers to enrich themselves." Ugo Foscolo, Discorso, p. 381. 155. "When this harlot turned her wanton eye upon the author (Dante), the giant, a fierce paramour, lashed her from head to foot—to signify that she must not turn away from him, since she had prostituted herself for money." Ottimo Commento. 158. "The meaning is, that this paramour of the Roman Court carried away the Church from the tree to which Christ bound it, and withdrew it from the sight of the good, and from a conspicuous situation, into a place of sin, and an obscure wood, full of vice and darkness, as described in the first canto of the Inferno." Ottimo Commento.

The boughs alone afforded ample screen
To hide the damsel and the monster new.

CANTO XXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

Beatrice reveals the future destiny of the Church, and desires Dante to bear record. He is conducted by Matelda to the river Eunoe. Having tasted its waters, he returns so pure and regenerate that he feels capable of mounting to the stars.

"O God, the heathen have defiled thy fane," 1
Alternate now the three and now the four,
Suffused with tears, began the holy train.
And Beatrice was listening, so subdued
By pity, that scarce Mary's features wore
More signs of grief, when at the cross she stood.
But when the other virgins had given place 7
For her to speak, she raised herself upright,
And answered to their words with glowing face:
"A little while—ye shall not me behold;
And yet again, O sisters, my delight,
A little while, and me ye shall behold."
Then all the seven in front of her she set, 13
And, beckoning unto me, a wish conveyed
That I should follow, with the sage, who yet

160. The monster is the car, rendered monstrous. See line 147. Philip le bel, during the pontificate of Clement V. in 1305, removed the Court of Rome to Avignon.

1. "The poet, introducing a lamentation of the seven ladies over the transformation of the car, *i. e.* of the Church, uses the language of the Psalmist, 'O God, the heathen are come into thy inheritance.' Psalm lxxix. 1." Ottimo Commento. In this psalm, David laments over the defilement of the temple, and persecution of the saints. It is sung alternately by the three theological and the four cardinal virtues. 6. The corruption of the Church is considered by Dante in the light of a second crucifixion. 10. "It is here shown how great was the grief of Beatrice—*i. e.* of the Holy Scripture—on hearing the above lamentation (the passion of the Church)....She answers the seven virtues in the words of the text, 'A little while,' &c. (John xvi. 16) *i. e.* 'Such heresy will enter among the Christian people, that I must depart, &c.....but not for long; I will appear to the faithful, and will reform the Church.'" Ottimo Commento. 12. The rhymes are alike in the original. 15. Statius,—who remained after Virgil's departure.

Remained, and that fair damsel:—thus she went:
  Nor had she, I believe, the tenth step made,
  Advancing, when her eyes on mine were bent;
And with a tranquil look she said: "Come near,
  That, should I be inclined to speak to thee,
  Thou mayest be able my discourse to hear."
When, as in duty bound, I had complied,—
  "Why, brother, not attempt to question me,"
  She added, "as thou journeyest by my side?"
As those, who, moved with too much reverence, strive
  To speak in presence of their betters, so
  That to the lips comes not the voice alive;
Thus it befel me, that scarce audibly,
  "O Lady," I began, "my wants ye know,
  And can a fitting remedy supply."
And thus she answered: "Banish shame and fear;
  That not like his who talketh in a dream
  Henceforth the tenor of thy words appear.
Know that the vessel which the serpent hurt,
  Was, and is not: nor let the offender deem
  That by a sop Heaven's wrath he may avert.
Without an heir the eagle not for aye
  Shall be, who left his feathers in the car,—
  Whence it became a monster—then a prey:
I see full surely—therefore I declare—
  The approach of constellations, from all bar
  And hindrance free, bringing a season near,
Wherein, One,—stamped five hundred ten and five,—

16. Matelda. 34. "Dante, fixing in the apostolic chair the mysterious woman of the Revelations, 'sitting on a scarlet coloured beast . . . . . having seven heads and ten horns,' and considering the beast and the harlot are in substance the same thing,—in order to show how, through the acquisition of wealth, the Church had fallen from its primitive sanctity, avails himself of the same formula with the Evangelist, 'The beast that thou sawest, was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition.' Rev. xvii. 8." Lombardi. 35. See Rev. xvii. 8. 43. "Let him that hath understanding, count the number of the beast," &c. Rev. xiii. 18. "Some explain this text thus:—five hundred, D;—ten, X:—five, V; saying, that at this time will come a leader (Dux) sent by heaven, who will reduce all the world to God. And this consummation they expect to take place at the end of the world; and cite the poet himself: 'Questilan caccera per ogni villa,' &c. Inf. i. 111.—Others say an Emperor is intended, &c. ....but the author means to speak of some great change

Angel of God—shall slay the thievish dame,
Her giant partner too of life deprive.
And haply my narration, dark, like those
Of Sphinx or Themis, credit may not claim,
Since o'er the mind, like them, a cloud it throws:
But soon, this hard enigma to explain,
The events shall be the Œdipus; nor blade
Nor flock therefrom shall injury sustain.
Mark thou; and ever as I spend my breath,
Be these my words to those alive conveyed
Whose life is but a constant race to death.
And when thou writest, tell what thou hast seen
Relating to this memorable tree,
Which twice already there despoiled hath been.
Whoever rends it, or commits abuse,
Offendeth God by act of blasphemy,
Who made it sacred, solely for his use.
Through tasting it, five thousand years and more
Yearned the first soul in longing and in woe
For Him who in his flesh the penance bore.
Thy reason sleeps, unless it hath appeared
For some especial cause inverted so,
And heavenward with such soaring head upreared:
And had not idle thoughts wrought in thy mind
As Elsa's stream; and their false pleasures been
A Pyramus to stain it, thou wouldst find
God's justice plainly evidenced to thee:
And in these circumstances would be seen
The moral of the interdicted tree.

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brought about by Heaven, signifying a most just and holy Prince, who will reform the state of the Church and of the faithful Christians." Ottimo Commento. 44. "The Pope, and the adulterous Roman Court, contaminated with every vice." Landino. 50. *i. e.* Shall perform the part of Œdipus, in affording an explanation of the enigma; and without the mischief the Thebans suffered from Themis. 55. Beatrice repeats her injunction to Dante in the last canto (line 103), to record what he had seen, for the benefit of mankind. 57. First, through Adam, secondly, through the Emperors. 62. "In this period Dante comprehends the years Adam lived, together with those he passed in Limbo" Biagioli. 68. Elsa is a river between Florence and Pisa, possessing petrifying qualities.—False pleasures are compared to Pyramus, darkening the mind with sin. 72. See Par. xxvi. 115, where Adam says, "that tasting of the tree was not in itself the cause of his long exile, but the transgression of God's commandment;" *i. e.* his disobedience.

But since thine intellect is turned to stone, 73
And is so dyed by sin, that at the glare
Of these my words 'tis dazed and overthrown,
Bear them along with thee, if not expressed,
Sketched out at least; like pilgrim wont to bear
His staff, returning home, with palm-leaf dressed."
Then I: "As wax the impression doth retain, 79
Which from the seal imprinted it derives,
So now by thee is stamped my very brain.
But wherefore doth thy wished-for converse soar
Above my mind, which, as the more it strives
To reach the summit, loses it the more?"
"The school which thou hast followed," she replied, 85
"I wish thee to discern, and see how far
Its lore falls short in following me thy guide;
And see how distant from the path divine
The ways of man—as distant e'en as are
From earth those heavens which most exalted shine."
"I cannot recollect," I answered her, 91
"Any estrangement in my love for thee;
Nor doth my conscience tell me that I err."
"If then" (this answer with a smile she gave)
"Thou canst not call it to thy memory,
Think how thou lately tastedst Lethe's wave:
And as from smoke, fire surely is inferred, 97
So, of a will enticed away elsewhere
Doth this oblivion prove the guilt incurred.
Truly my words as naked now shall be,
As haply may thine eyes be fit to bear,—
Not wont such mighty mystery to see."
With more resplendence and with slower pace 103
The sun on the meridian mounted high,
Whose aspect varies with the change of place—
When, as a scout sent out before a band
Draws up, on seeing aught of novelty;
E'en thus the seven fair damsels took their stand
At the far limit of a death-like shade— 109
Like that beneath black boughs and foliage green
O'er the cool streams in Alpine glens displayed.

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85. The school in which Dante had been brought up was that of the corrupt Papacy—"teaching for commandments the doctrines of men,"—a school of practical infidelity.

Springing before them from the self-same source
  Methought were Tigris and Euphrates seen,—
  Like friends, each loth to take a separate course.
"O light, O glory of the human race, 115
  What water this, which flows with double tide
  Forth from one fount, borne hence thro' distant space?"
To my request was made this answer: "Pray
  Matelda to inform thee."—Then replied
  (Like one who somewhat in excuse would say)
The beauteous maid: "By me were told to him 121
  Both these and other things; and sure am I
  That Lethe's water hath not made them dim."
Then Beatrice: "Perhaps some weightier care,
  Which oftentimes destroys the memory,
  Hath made the intellectual eye less clear.
To Eunoë's fount do thou direct his course, 127
  And, as thou art wont, revive his overthrown
  And drooping virtue in its crystal source."
Like to some gentle soul, that frameth no
  Excuse, but makes another's will her own,
  At the first signal given her;—even so
Advanced the beauteous lady, soon as she 133
  My hand had taken; and with courteous air
  To Statius said: "Thou bear him company."
Had I, O reader, space to write—in part
  At least, then would I sing that beverage rare,
  Whose sweetness ne'er had satisfied my heart:
But since the leaves, to this my second strain 139
  Allowed, are full—no longer be pursued
  The theme, and Art restrict me with her rein.
From that most sacred water back I came
  Regenerate, like plants that are renewed
  With foliage fresh,—made pure throughout my frame,
And with a will to mount the stars endued.

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113. Rivers flowing through Paradise (Genesis ii. 10), but called quaintly, Lethe and Eunoe, according to the poet's allegory—the one taking away the memory of sin, and the other having a regenerating power. 124. Beatrice suggests that she herself must be the cause of Dante's forgetfulness—"she who precluded every other thought." (xxxii. 93.) 139. *i. e.* "The thirty-three books assigned to this canticle are full—so that with as many of Paradise, and one more of the Inferno (the first canto forming merely a proem to the whole work), the sum of a hundred cantos will be completed." Lombardi.



TO EUNOE'S FOUNT DO THOU DIRECT HIS COURSE.

PARADISO.

INTRODUCTION.

By a course of allegorical representations Dante conducts us through the three stages of human existence.—In the Inferno we witness the misery of sin: in the Purgatorio, the struggles of virtue. Those who have laboured up the hill,—who have surmounted the temptations of this world, and begun to taste the pleasures of the next, are described as enjoying that peace of mind which is imaged by the terrestrial Paradise. It is not, however, in the delights of Eden that the high destiny of man finds its full accomplishment. Verdant bowers and peaceful streams may be the emblem, but are not the reward, of holiness. As through the transgression of Adam all forfeited the blissful state of innocence; so, all who are justified through the merits of Christ, not only recover the original happiness of their first parents, but are exalted to a higher state of felicity than that from which they fell. The task of the Poet in approaching such a theme becomes more arduous.—In describing the abodes of guilt or of virtue upon earth, he could avail himself of images furnished by his senses; and had a foundation, as it were, for the exercise of his imaginative powers. But since "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into t heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him," by what similitude shall be described the mansions of heaven? The attempt, indeed, may at first ap- tuous. If, however, in this world we are di- ected to "walk by faith," and not "by sight;"—if, "where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also," then it surely becomes us to raise our minds to some faint anticipations of the pure and perfect joys of the world to come. Meditating on such subjects, Dante realized in his conceptions the vision of St. Paul; and, "rapt to the third heaven," was favoured with a sight of things which his unaided imagination would have failed to conceive. And although it is perhaps difficult to grasp the full meaning of those burning

thoughts which are frequently thrown forth from the mind of the poet, we can scarcely doubt that he was gifted with an extraordinary measure of divine grace, when we regard the lucid manner in which he has expounded the truths of the Gospel, and opened up to us a vision of superhuman felicity.

He enters upon the subject by declaring at once his intention of describing the glorious kingdom of which he had been vouchsafed a sight. The novelty of his attempt he freely confesses; nor does he undertake it through any confidence in his own abilities, or peculiar advantages, but from a strong sense of the privilege of man to hold communion with his Maker.* Hence he combats the fallacy that we are of necessity bound down to earth—vindicates our prerogative of soaring upwards; and declares, that did we not allow ourselves to be led away by false pleasures, our tendency would be an union with Him, in whom "we live and move and have our being."† But since few avail themselves of this high privilege, he warns those "who have not tasted Angels' food betimes," lest they venture to follow him in his sublime aspirations.‡

His elevation is thus described:—Gazing upon Beatrice, he is endued with power to bear awhile the intensity of the Divine Light.§ This so wonderfully increases, that "suddenly day seemed added unto day;"‖ as though Omnipotence had lighted up the sky with another sun; and he is insensibly translated from earth to heaven.

The first planet, to which in company with his celestial guide he finds himself exalted, is the Moon.– The appearance of its inhabitants, dimly and faintly seen through an atmosphere likened unto clear and tranquil water, is beautifully described;¶ and the contentment of those to whom this lowest sphere is assigned, proves that however the mansions of heaven may differ in glory,—still, from the universal happiness which conformity to the will of God produces, all form part of one glorious and eternal Paradise.**

In the planet Mercury, to which the Poet next ascends,†† he meets with Justinian, who recites the conquests and successes of the Romans, in order to establish the divine right of the Emperors. Having occasion to mention the

* Canto i. 109. † Ib. i. 136. ‡ Ib. ii. 5, 10. § Ib. i. 54.
‖ Ib. i. 61. ¶ Ib. iii. 1[illegible]. ** Ib. iii. 70, 88. †† Ib. v. 93.

destruction of Jerusalem under Titus, Dante is led to the subject of our Saviour's crucifixion, and the redemption of mankind. This he calls "the most sublime scheme that has been, or shall be, from the beginning to the end of the world;"* and he treats of it with such astonishing clearness and precision, that from a few stanzas may be gathered more solid divinity than from volumes of theological discourses.

The third heaven to which he ascends is Venus;†—the fourth, the Sun.‡ Within the latter are seen glorified spirits, who encompass Dante and Beatrice in two concentric circles, and by a most magnificent simile are compared to a double rainbow.§ Having recorded the praises of St. Francis and St. Dominic, they are requested by Beatrice to satisfy the curiosity of Dante as to their own condition. At this request, each star increases in brilliancy; and in the warmth of their charity and benevolence they break forth into songs of joy, while they dance around their terrestrial visitor.‖ After a hymn sung to the blessed Trinity, Solomon tells Dante that the brightness shed around them by the flame of charity is proportioned to the ardour they severally feel—that on resuming their bodies, they will receive an accession of light, to enable them to see God; and that their faculties will be endued with an increased capacity for happiness.¶

Mounting up to the sphere of Mars, the fifth heaven, Dante now beholds the souls of warriors, who died fighting in defence of the faith, ranged in form of a cross, along which they move to the notes of a melodious hymn. Enamoured of the sound, he forgets awhile even Beatrice herself.** Suddenly the spirit of Cacciaguida his ancestor descends, like a shooting star, to the foot of the cross, and fondly addresses him in language similar to that used by Anchises on beholding his son in the Elysian fields.†† Cacciaguida gives a history of his family; and this leads him to contrast the ancient with the modern state of Florence. Hence the ensuing canto is devoted to a continued lamentation over the degeneracy of his country, and a beautiful description of the peaceful and contented times of old.‡‡ Cacciaguida then predicts to Dante his exile, and the calamities he is about to suffer from the ingratitude of his countrymen.§§

* Canto vii. 114. † Ib. viii. ‡ Ib. x. § Ib. xii. 10
‖ Ib. xiv. 25. ¶ Ib. xiv. 58. ** Ib. xiv. 131. †† Ib. xv. 28.
‡‡ Ib xv. 97. §§ Ib. xvii. 55.

A change now comes over Dante's feelings; and conscious of an accession of spiritual joy, he finds himself translated to the planet Jupiter.* Here are beheld numerous stars, containing the spirits of those who have been distinguished upon earth by their love of Justice. These presently arrange themselves in form of an Eagle, emblematical of universal government. Proceeding from the consideration of earthly to that of heavenly justice, he vindicates the counsels of God, and passes a severe censure on those who dare to arraign His decrees, and would deny the benefit of our Saviour's death to those who lived before the Gospel.†

Beholding Beatrice increased in beauty, Dante becomes aware of his elevation to the planet Saturn. Here are seen contemplative spirits, ascending a ladder whose summit reaches to heaven. By a smile from Beatrice he is encouraged to ascend; and is conducted to the constellation of Gemini; ‡ whence, looking back through the spheres, he surveys our insignificant globe, and marvels how it can engross the attention of immortal beings.§

Summoned before St. Peter, St. James, and St. John, Dante undergoes an examination upon the three cardinal virtues, which these three Apostles are respectively supposed to represent.‖ The confession of his faith having been in the first place made to St. Peter, that Apostle expresses his delight by embracing him three times, and pronouncing upon him a divine benediction.¶ And here it may be remarked, how, amid these high and heavenly scenes, the striking of a single chord in the patriotic breast of the poet brings him back for a time to the things of earth.—That Faith, which obtained such approbation from the angelic host, he had first acknowledged at his baptism in the Church of St. John at Florence. The thought of his native country, from which he had been so cruelly banished, is immediately associated with the hope of his return. He suddenly interrupts the course of his narration; and in an ardent remonstrance anticipates the meed of his exertions in the cause of religion.**

In his examination by St. James, he tells us that he derived his first encouragement to place his Hope in God from the Psalms of David; and this confession draws forth the sympathy of the heavenly host. St. John is described as uniting

* Canto xviii. 69. † Ib. xx. 94. ‡ Ib. xxii. 101. § Ib. xxii. 135.
‖ Ib. xxiv. xxv. xxvi. ¶ Ib. xxiv. 153. ** Ib. xxv. 1.

himself to his fellow Apostles, like a modest virgin, who joyfully rises from her seat, and enters the nuptial dance with singleness of heart, intent only on doing honour to the bridal pair.* This beloved Disciple, who rested on the breast of our Saviour, attracts the attention of the poet to such a degree, that Dante is deprived of sight, and falls into a trance.† During this abstraction from the things of earth, he is examined by St. John concerning Charity, or the love of God; when, having expressed himself in sentiments that elicit the approbation of heaven, he is restored to sight by a look from Beatrice.‡

After an interview with our first parents, he hears a hymn sung to the Trinity, and in an ecstacy of delight exclaims,

"O bliss ineffable! O rapture pure!
O life of love and peace! O wealth that knows
No wish beyond,—unsullied and secure!"§

St. Peter then addressing Dante, gives utterance to a lofty discourse against Pope Boniface as an usurper, and declares that his own place in the Church is now vacant in the sight of God. He then breaks out into a general invective against the Popes of his time—denounces them as wolves in sheep's clothing,—upbraids them with their venality in selling Indulgences, and charges the poet to reveal their wickedness to the world.‖ Such is the indignation of the Saints at the recital, that heaven is disturbed by an eclipse, similar to that which took place at the death of our Saviour.

The poet is now carried up to the ninth sphere, or heaven of fixed stars, where the Deity is seen, surrounded by the celestial Hierarchy, or nine orders of Angels.¶ Beatrice tells Dante that the object of God in creating these holy Beings, "who are blooming in an abode of sempiternal spring," was to multiply images and combinations of Himself;—and from the beauty of these "mirrors of the Deity," she argues His boundless perfection.**

All the praises that Dante has hitherto bestowed upon Beatrice would fail, he declares, to give an idea of the superhuman loveliness with which she is now invested, as she ascends with him to the highest heaven.

* Canto xxv. 103. † Ib. xxv. 113, 118. ‡ Ib. xxvi. 76.
§ Ib. xxvii. 7. ‖ Ib. xxvii. 22, 40, 52, 66. ¶ Ib. xxviii. 16, 98.
** Ib. xxix. 13, 142.

Out of this stream of Light, proceeding from the immediate presence of God, Angels glowing like rubies are seen to rise and contemplate themselves in the Divine Effulgence:

" And as a cliff looks down upon the bed
Of some clear stream, to see how richly crowned
With flowers and foliage is its lofty head;
So all from earth who hither e'er returned,
Seated on more than thousand thrones around,
Within the Eternal Light themselves discerned."*

Varying the description of the "beauty of Holiness," the poet now compares the assemblage of the Saints to a Rose of purest white, expanding beneath the rays of the Eternal Sun; and, like the leaves of that flower, ranged in concentric circles around the glorious Orb whose light they variously enjoy.† Amid these, Angels are seen ascending and descending, who as they fly between the "Flower and the Fountain of their bliss," impart the gifts they have acquired. —Meditating on this blessed scene of peace and love, the poet suddenly contrasts it with the stormy condition of his own beloved country.—"If the Barbarians," he exclaims, "were astonished at beholding Rome on their arrival from the north,—

I who from earth to an immortal fane
Had passed,—from time into eternity—
From Florence to a people just and sane—
What great astonishment belike was mine!"‡

Then, as he looks "with searching ken" through the several ranks of the blessed, he compares himself to a pilgrim, who arrived at last before the temple he has long desired to see, surveys it with fond delight, in the hope of being able, on his return home, to communicate to others the glories he has witnessed.—Beatrice he beholds enthroned far above in the highest circle, and distinctly visible to his sight, though removed to so immense a distance. To her he pours forth his gratitude for enabling him to see all these wondrous things—declares that to her he owes his freedom from the bonds of slavery, and implores a continuance of her protection; so that his soul, some future day, may quit its earthly tenement, purified and approved by her.§ By the intercession of St. Bernard, Dante is endued with grace to look upon the

* Canto xxx. 109. † Ib. xxxi. 10; xxxii. 18. ‡ Ib. xxxi. 37.
§ Ib. xxxi. 90.

brightness of Jehovah;* and offers up a prayer that he may be enabled to show forth to unborn nations some traces of the glory revealed to him. In the profundity of the Divine Light he beholds all that the universe contains—his power of vision gaining force as he prolongs the contemplation,—till, absorbed in the overwhelming glory of the sight, he finds it impossible to turn away.† He attempts to describe the Trinity by comparing its appearance to three circles of different hues, but of like dimensions. He then declares that he had attained the summit of his desire—his will and affections being wholly merged in the will of the Almighty.

THE MATERIAL HEAVENS,

AND THEIR GUIDING INTELLIGENCES OR ANGELS.

(Frequently referred to in the Paradiso.)

Dante followed the Ptolemaic system, which supposes our earth to be at rest in the centre of the system, and that there are nine heavens (besides the empyrean) wheeling round it, in circles that increase in size and rapidity of motion, according to their distance from the centre. Their order, reckoned from that centre, is as follows, according to Dante in his Convito.

"1. The Moon. 2. Mercury. 3. Venus. 4. The Sun. 5. Mars. 6. Jove. 7. Saturn. 8. The Stars. 9. The Primum Mobile, (not discernible except by the motion it imparts to the other heavens)—crystalline, *i.e.* diaphanous or transparent—its motion exceeding swift, through the intensely fervent desire which every part of the ninth heaven has to be united with every part of that most divine and peaceful heaven (the empyrean) in which the Primum Mobile wheels, with such desire that it is, as it were, inconceivable." (Dante, Convito Trat. ii. 4.)

Dante followed also the system of Dionysius the Areopagite, who in the books attributed to him (See Par. ii. 117, and xxviii. 130) lays down that there are nine orders of Intelligences or Angels. And these angels Dante believed, in common with many of the Fathers, influenced the nine

* Canto xxxiii. 43. † Ib. xxxiii. 97.

Heavens respectively, whence descended their influence upon earth. ("We must know that the rays of each heaven, are the means by which their virtue descends on things below." Convito Trat. ii. 7.) "It is manifest to us that these creatures (the Angels) exist in the greatest number; since Holy Church . . . . declares of these most noble creatures that they are as it were innumerable, and divides them into three Hierarchies;—and each Hierarchy has three ranks, since the Church affirms that there are nine orders of spiritual creatures. The first is that of the Angels; the second that of the Archangels; the third of the Thrones; and these three orders form the first Hierarchy. . . . Then follow the Dominations, next the Virtues, then the Princedoms; and these form the second Hierarchy. Above these are the Powers, and the Cherubim, and above all the Seraphim; and these form the third Hierarchy." (Convito Trat. ii. cap. vi.)

According to this two-fold system,

In the invisible Heavens,		In the material Heavens.
The Seraphim	actuated	The Primum Mobile.
The Cherubim	,,	The sphere of the fixed stars.
The Thrones	,,	That of Saturn.
The Dominations	,,	— of Jupiter.
The Virtues	,,	— of Mars.
The Powers	,,	— of the Sun.
The Principalities	,,	— of Venus.
The Archangels	,,	— of Mercury.
The Angels	,,	— of the Moon.

PARADISO.

CANTO I.

ARGUMENT.

Rapt to the highest heaven, Dante experiences a change in his nature, through an infusion of divine grace.

The glory of the Lord, to all things given, 1
With greater lustre here, with lesser there,
Pervades Creation.—In that sphere of heaven
Which most abundantly receives his light
Was I,—and saw what no one may declare,
Who hath descended from such glorious height:
For drawing near unto its chiefest Good, 7
Depths so profound our intellect explores,
It cannot by the memory be pursued.
Yet whatsoever of that holy clime
Is treasured up within my mental stores,
Shall now be made the subject of my rhyme.
Make me such vessel of thy might, O thou 13
Benign Apollo, and so aid my strain,
That thy loved laurel may adorn my brow.
(One of Parnassus' heights so far was found
Sufficient, but I now require the twain,
Ere with success my last emprize be crowned :)
Enter my breast, and wake such numbers there 19
As when the daring Marsyas thou of old
Didst from the scabbard of his members tear.
O Power divine! if thou wilt succour deign,
That I a faint resemblance may unfold
Of that blest kingdom traced within my brain,—

1. "It is evident that the Divine Light, *i. e.* the Divine Goodness, Wisdom and Virtue, shine everywhere." Dante, Dedication of the Paradiso. 4. "Caught up into Paradise, the third heaven," like St. Paul, Dante heard "unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." 2 Cor. xii. 4. 20. The Satyr Marsyas, having defied the musical powers of Apollo, was flayed alive for his audacity.

Thou shalt behold me come to thy loved tree, 25
And wreathe my brow with those unfading bays
Which this exalted theme shall win for me.
So rarely Poet now to these aspires,
Or Cæsar, to attain immortal praise,
(Shame and disgrace to man's low born desires)
That joy should to the Delphic God arise, 31
When haply any one attempts to gain
The high reward of the Peneian prize.
From little spark may burst a mighty flame;
And after me perchance with loftier strain
May other bard response from Cyrrha claim.
Through various openings bursts on mortal eyes 37
The lamp of this our world; but that which joins
Four circles with three crosses best supplies
His light, as, rising by a fairer road,
And happier star, he tempers and combines
The mundane wax in more congenial mode.—
Through such an opening morn was there displayed, 43
And twilight here;—that hemisphere was bright,
While all the other was enwrapt in shade,
When Beatrice I saw her eyes upraise,
And on the left confront the sun's full light;—
So never eagle fixed his stedfast gaze.
As from the first proceeds the second ray, 49
Reflected, as though heaven again it sought,
Like pilgrim bent upon his homeward way;
So I, her eyes regarding, while she stood
Contemplative, her very action caught;
And with unearthly ken the sun I viewed.

36. A city devoted to Apollo. 37. The Sun is said to rise through various openings, because the sign of the zodiac, whence he emerges, varies with the seasons. 40. The opening here spoken of is that when the sun rises in Aries, conjoined with Venus, the "happier star"—viz. in the spring; when the earth is best suited to receive the impression of his beams. At this time the horizon, the zodiac, the equator, and the equinoctial colour join, intersecting each other, and form three crosses. 43. It was morning at this time in Paradise, and night on earth. 49. *i. e.* The ray of reflection, generated by that of incidence, turns back, like the pilgrim, after he has attained the object of his journey. 52. The grace of God, reflected from Beatrice to Dante, endues him with superhuman power.

Much is accorded in that holy place 55
Denied us here;—thanks to the hallowed ground
Made for the dwelling of the human race.
Not long could I endure the ardent glow;
Yet long enough to see sparks burst around,
Such as we see from red hot iron flow.
Suddenly day seemed added unto day; 61
As though another sun had in the skies
Been set by Him who rules with boundless sway.
In raptured gaze stood Beatrice, intent
Upon the eternal wheels; and I—mine eyes
Drawn from the sun, and on her face now bent—
Felt, as I looked upon her, such emotion, 67
As Glaucus, tasting of the herb, which made
Him fit companion for the Gods of ocean.
That superhuman change words cannot show;
Then let suffice the example now displayed:—
Grace may hereafter fuller proof bestow.
Whether in spirit only I was there, 73
Illumed by thee, O Love, that rulest the skies,
Thou knowest, who raised me to that heavenly sphere.—
What time the wheel thou movest eternally
By thy attractive power, had drawn mine eyes
With the sweet harmony attuned by Thee,
The sun so lighted up the heaven, that ne'er 79
Did lake, augmented or by flood or rain,
Of such a broad and vast expanse appear.
The novel sound and ample light inspired
Desire so strong the cause to ascertain
As never had before my bosom fired:
When she, to whom were all my thoughts revealed, 85
As to myself, ere I my wish could tell,
To calm my troubled mind her lips unsealed.

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55. *i. e.* Our faculties are far more perfect in the terrestrial Paradise, where Dante was, than on earth. 65. *i. e.* The ever circling spheres of Heaven. 68. Glaucus is fabled to have been a fisherman, who seeing the fish he had caught leap back into the sea, fed upon the grass whereon they had lain, and became a marine Deity. 73. "Whether in the body, I cannot tell, or whether out of the body, I cannot tell." 2 Cor. xii. 2. 76. The heavens, according to Plato, are kept in motion by the love of God, attracting them to himself, and produce the harmony of the spheres. 82 The harmony mentioned line 78.

"Fancies untrue have dulled thy mental sight;
  And things, that otherwise were seen full well,
  Are thus enveloped in perpetual night.
Thou art not, as thou thinkest, upon earth;
  But not so swift shoots down the lightning's flame,
  As thou dost mount to where it has its birth."
If these her words concise, to me addressed
  With smiling lip, my former doubt o'ercame,
  Now by another was I still oppressed;
And said:—"My greatest doubt is at an end;
  But yet it wakes within me wonderment,
  How through these lighter bodies I ascend."
With pitying look her eyes on me were thrown;
  And her's was like a mother's gaze, intent
  Upon the face of her delirious son.
She then began:—"A law of Order reigns
  Throughout Creation; and this law it is
  Which like to God the universe maintains.
Herein do higher creatures see displayed
  The trace of the Eternal Might; and this
  The end for which such ordinance was made.
All natures to this heavenly law incline,
  Approaching each, according to its kind,
  Some more, some less, unto their Source Divine.
Hence move they on unto their different ends
  Through the great sea of Being—each designed
  To reach the port to which its instinct tends.
This upward to the moon doth fire direct;
  This moves the heart of mortals; this doth bind
  The globe itself, and earth to earth connect.
Creatures devoid of intellect, no less
  This arrow strikes, than those of nobler kind,
  Who both intelligence and love possess.
The Providence which regulates the whole
  Makes ever with its light that heaven content

106. "It is the intention of God that every created thing should represent the divine likeness as far as its nature permits.... And though it cannot be said that inferior creatures are made in the image of God, still all may be said to bear a similitude of Him, since the whole universe is nothing else but a trace of the Divine Goodness." Dante, De Mon. b. i. p. 24. (Fraticelli).

In which the heaven of greater speed doth roll
And thither, as to a predestined site,
Impels us now that cord's instinctive bent,
Whose constant aim is to confer delight.
'Tis true, that often—as from artist's hand 127
A form proceeds not answering his design,
Because the matter hears not his command;—
So will the creature, moved by adverse force,
Being free to stand or fall, sometimes decline,
And swerve, thus tempted, from the appointed course,
(E'en as we see fire falling from a cloud) 133
If the first impulse that would mount the sky,
To earth is by fallacious pleasure bowed.
Nor should'st thou marvel more, if right I deem,
At thy ascent, than that from mountain high
Down to the lowest plain descends a stream.
More wonder, truly, if thou hadst remained 139
Inert below, although made free to rise,—
Like living fire, to rest on earth constrained."
Then unto heaven again she raised her eyes.

CANTO II.

ARGUMENT.

Dante warns his readers not to follow him in his adventurous voyage unless they have accustomed themselves to divine contemplations. The first planet he visits is the Moon.

O YE who fain would listen to my song, 1
Following in little bark full eagerly
My venturous ship, that chanting hies along,
Turn and behold your native shores again;
Tempt not the deep, lest haply losing me,

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123. The Empyrean. 138. As it is natural for water to descend, so is it natural for man, when not impeded by sin, to contemplate the heavens, and approach God, in whose image he was made.

2. The poet compares himself to one meditating a voyage, as in the opening of the Purgatorio, "The light bark of my genius hoists her sail." Continuing the metaphor, and assuming now a ship for his genius, as more fitted for the deep ocean he is about to enter, he warns those who would follow him in his dangerous voyage, not to make the attempt, unless they have betimes accustomed themselves to heavenly contemplation.

In unknown paths bewildered ye remain.
I am the first this voyage to essay;
Minerva breathes—Apollo is my guide:
And new born Muses do the Bears display.
Ye other few who have looked up on high
For Angels' food betimes, e'en here supplied
Largely, but not enough to satisfy,—
'Mid the deep ocean ye your course may take, 13
My track pursuing the pure waters through,
Ere reunites the quickly closing wake.
Those glorious ones who drove their venturous prow
To Colchos, wondered not as ye will do,
When they saw Jason working at the plough.—
The ceaseless innate thirsting of the soul 19
Bore us to God's own dwelling at such pace
As men on earth perceive the sphere to roll.
I looked on Beatrice—and she on heaven;
And in the time that to its resting-place,
Shot from the string, an arrow may be driven,
Up to a lofty region was I brought,
Where things of wondrous aspect met my gaze:
Then she, to whom was known my every thought,
Turned to me, glad as beautiful, and said:
"See that a grateful heart to God thou raise,
By whom to this first star we have been led."
Methought a cloud enveloped us—all bright, 31
Polished, and solid, and of brilliancy
Like diamond sparkling with the solar light.
The eternal pearl received us, as a ray
In water is received—not parted by
The beams that through its substance make their way.
If I were in the body,— (and in vain 37
The human intellect desires to know
How one dimension others can contain,)

9. The Ursa major and minor are here used for any glorious constellation. 10. "O happy those few who sit at that table where the bread of Angels is eaten! and wretched those who partake of food common to animals!" Dante, Convito Trat 1, cap. 1. 16. The Argonauts.—After taming fiery bulls, Jason ploughed land with them, and sowed it with serpent's teeth, whence sprang men. 25. The region of the moon, called, line 34, "the eternal pearl," and line 30, "the first star," as being the first to which Dante ascends.



[illegible]

With greater ardour should we be incited
To see that Essence, which, revealed, will show
How God and man in substance were united.
This, which, not proved, through faith we now believe, 43
Then shall we see, all open to our view,
Like the first truth our youthful minds receive.
I answered: "Lady, unto him I pay
The tribute of my heart—most deeply due,
Who from the earth hath borne me thus away.
But if it please thee, those dark spots explain 49
Upon the surface of this body shown,
Which cause on earth the fabling tales of Cain."
At this she gently smiled; then answered me:
"If man's opinion be to error prone,
(And sense supplies a most defective key)
Surely thou should'st not quail beneath the stings 55
Of wonder now, since unto thee 'tis clear
That reason, following sense, hath feeble wings.
But, tell me, what to thee these shadows seem?"
Then I: "The different colours that appear,
Proceed from bodies dense or rare, I deem."
She then replied: "Full surely shalt thou see 61
How sunk in error thy belief, if well
Thou list my reasoning to the contrary.—
In the eighth sphere is found full many a star
Differing in size and kind, as thou may'st tell,
Judging from what their various aspects are.
If dense or rare brought such effect about, 67
Distributed in different degrees,
One single influence would prevail throughout:
But varied influences needs must owe
Their source to formal principles—yet these,
Save one, thy argument destroyed would show.
Again, if it were true that rarity 73

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51. See Inf. xx. 125, and note. 59. Dante attributes the spots in the moon to a supposed rarity in certain parts;—Beatrice to the degree in which the Angel who directs the stars partakes of the divine splendour. See line 143. (The tedious disquisition that follows to the end of the canto is calculated to lead to a very erroneous conception of the poet's genius. Yet it has been imitated by Milton.) 71. A scholastic term, meaning essential sources or causes, i. e. the Angels: whence Milton calls them "essential powers." Par. Lost, v. 840.

Cause of the darkness on its surface were,
Void in some places must this planet be,
As in a body, fat and lean abound
In different proportions: so would here
This volume's leaves of different size be found.
The sun's eclipse would prove the fact if true;
As, when one rare is on another brought,
The light thus added shines transparent through:
But this is not; and if I clearly show
The one case false, the other falls to nought;
Thy supposition thus I overthrow.
And some impediment there needs must be,
If the light may not through the substance pass,
So that the dense resist its contrary.
Hence is the ray reflected back again,
As colours are reflected from a glass,
Which lead concealed behind it doth contain.
Now thou wilt say the shadows seem more black
In one place than another; since the force
That throws them out is seated further back.
Of this thy doubt would'st thou be satisfied,
Experience will instruct thy mind, that source
Whence are the rivers of your arts supplied.
Three mirrors take, and of them move away
Two in like mode, and let thine eye the one
At greater distance 'twixt the two survey.
Then let a lamp behind thee stationed be,
So that its light on all of them be thrown,
And come again reflected back to thee.
Although the distant one not through so vast
A space extend, yet hence thou wilt behold
From all the three an equal radiance cast.
Now, as the ground beneath the sparkling snow
Loses its colour, and becomes less cold,
When struck by Phœbus' ardent rays—e'en so
Thy mind, of error disabused, with light
So vivid would I fain illuminate,
That it shall quiver on thy wondering sight.
Within the heaven where peace eternal lives,

112. Within the empyrean is the primum mobile, or ninth heaven, which imparts motion to the various lower heavens

Circles a body, fraught with power so great,
Each object in it motion thence receives.
The heaven that follows, bright with many a star, 115
Imparts this motion to the essences
Which, though distinct, by it encompassed are.
Their varied properties each other heaven
Doth variously dispose of, so that these
Are each to their own seed and object given.
These organs of the universe thus move, 121
Each to the circle, lower in degree,
Diffusing virtue drawn from that above.
Observe attentively how I my way
Make towards the truth, so much desired by thee:
That henceforth from the ford thou mayest not stray.
From blest Intelligences needs must flow, 127
Motion and influence to each several round;
As to the hammer from the artist's blow:
So, that same heaven with stars resplendent dight
Receives its impress from the Mind profound,
That rolls it ever through the fields of light.
And as the soul within your clay confined, 133
Pervades the several members of the frame,
Which unto various functions are assigned;
Thus doth intelligence with goodness fill
The orbs of heaven;—though multiplied, the same;
On its own unity revolving still.
Each different virtue forms a different union 139
With that fair star enlivened by its beams,
As soul and body hold in you communion.
Shines through each orb the influence diversely,
Swayed by the joyous nature whence it streams,
Like gladness through the pupil of the eye.
Hence is derived the difference that we mark 145
'Twixt star and star, and not from dense or clear;
And this the formal cause, whence light, and dark,
Proportioned to it, on the moon appear."

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115. *i. e.* The heaven of the fixed stars communicates its motion to "the essences," or heavens within it. **121.** The heavenly circles are said to influence those within them by means of their Intelligences. See "Material Heavens, &c.," prefixed. **130.** See line 115. **143.** By its directing Intelligence or Angel.

CANTO III.

ARGUMENT.

Dante describes the shadowy forms of several Nuns seen in the Moon, who having not fully adhered to their vows, are placed in this lowest sphere. Piccarda—Constance.

THAT Sun which first inflamed my breast with love, 1
Truth's beauteous aspect had to me displayed,
Strong in the power to prove and to disprove:
And I, to avow my error, and confess
The certainty on which I now was stayed,
With head upraised was fain my guide to address.
But lo! a vision my attention crossed. 7
Which on itself mine eyes so riveted,
The avowal I contemplated was lost.
And as through polished glass, or water clear
And tranquil, not so deep but that the bed
Distinct to the observer may appear,
The features of our countenance are viewed 13
So dimly, that not pearl on forehead white
Comes to the eye with radiance more subdued;
Thus, faces prompt to speak I now beheld;
Whence fell I into error opposite
To that which once Narcissus' soul impelled.
Soon as their semblance my attention drew, 19
Supposing these were merely forms reflected,
I turned mine eyes the real forms to view;
But nought beholding, called them back anon,
Full on the orbs of my loved guide directed,
Which, as she smiled, with holy lustre shone.
"Be not astonished that I smile forsooth 25
At this thy childish judgment," she returned;
"Thy foot not yet is based upon the truth,
But throws thee back on emptiness again.

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1. Beatrice is the sun here spoken of. She had just been explaining to Dante the cause of the spots in the Moon. 7. The "vision" consists of light and shadowy figures seen in the moon. These, on nearer inspection, prove to be the spirits of nuns, who, having been constrained to marry, had not returned to their convents when it was in their power, and are therefore located in the moon, as an emblem of their inconstancy. 18. Narcissus, seeing the reflection of himself in a fountain, supposed it was another person:—Dante fell into the opposite error, mistaking real objects for reflected ones.

True substances are now by thee discerned,
Whom broken vows in exile here detain.
Speak, therefore, and rely on what they say; 31
For the True Light wherein they ever rest
Doth not permit them from Itself to stray."
Then to the soul who in her looks displayed
Most wish for converse, I these words addressed,
Like one by over-eagerness betrayed.
" O well-born spirit, who in the glowing flood 37
Of life eternal dost that sweetness feel,
Which must be tasted to be understood;
To me it were a boon I well should prize,
Would'st thou thy name and destiny reveal."
Whereat she promptly, and with smiling eyes:—
" Our charity ne'er bars a just desire, 43
And wills, as doth the Charity divine,
That all her court to be like Her aspire.
A virgin sister upon earth was I;
Nor will the beauty with which now I shine
Conceal me from thy faithful memory;
But thou wilt know Piccarda—blessed here 49
Amid these multitudes of spirits blest,—
Inhabitants of this the lowest sphere.
Enamoured of the Holy Spirit alone,
We joy to share the mansions of his rest,
And in his pleasure recognise our own.
And this our state, which lowly seems to be, 55
Compared with their's on high, doth Heaven assign,
Because our vows were kept imperfectly."
" In your most wondrous features," I returned,
" Is manifested somewhat so divine,
No trace of former likeness is discerned;
And this the cause of my slow memory: 61
Yet what you tell me now assists me so,
I call you to my mind more readily.
But say, ye blessed ones, to greater height
Aspire ye, that your Maker ye may know,
And of his face obtain a nearer sight?"
She smiled;—her smile the other spirits caught, 67
And, answering me, a look so joyous wore

49. See Purgatorio, xxiv. 10, and note.

As though the Primal love that flame had wrought.
"O brother, Charity so calms our will,—
We know not what it is to thirst for more;
And full contentment every heart doth fill.
To loftier region did we wish to rise, 73
Our wishes would with His discordant be,
Who for our portion gives these lower skies:—
Which may not be, if thou consider well
The real nature of the charity
Wherein 'tis here our destiny to dwell.
For 'tis essential to this state of bliss 79
To keep our wills within the Will divine,
That ours may be identified with His:
And hence, though divers are the seats we fill,
All are content as is the King benign,
Who moulds our hearts according to His will.
Our peace is in His will—that ocean vast, 85
Whither all creatures tend—both those that He
Creates, and those by plastic nature cast."
Then was it clear to me that every place
In heaven is Paradise;—though different be
The appointed measure of the heavenly grace.
But as when sated with one sort of meat, 91
And craving still another—for the one
We offer thanks, for the other we entreat;
E'en so did I;—and showed by act and word
My wish to know the thread she had not spun
To its full end;—then this reply I heard:—
"Transcendent purity and stainless worth 97
Have to a loftier heaven exalted her,
Whose rules are still obeyed upon your earth;
So that her followers may both day and night

---

72. The saints enjoy perfect contentment, whatever the station assigned them, being satisfied with the justice of their sentence, and resigning their wills to the divine will. 86. Those made immediately by God, and those born in the course of nature by successive generation. 88. "There is one glory of the sun," &c. (1 Cor. xv. 41) *i.e.* There will be different degrees of glory at the resurrection, even among the spirits of the saints. 91. Satisfied on one point, viz. whether the inhabitants of the moon indulged in higher aspirations, Dante now wishes to learn "what thread she had not spun to its full end," *i.e.* what religious vow she had failed to perform. 98. St. Clara d'Assisi, Abbess of the Franciscan convent

Dwell with that Bridegroom who receives each prayer
That Charity makes pleasing in His sight.
To follow her, I in my youthful days
Fled from the world; and in her garb arrayed,
Promised observance of her holy ways.
Men, prone to evil rather than to good,
Tore me away from the sweet cloister's shade;
God knows the life I afterwards pursued.
This other splendour, seen upon my right,
And on whose form abundantly are shed
From all our sphere continued streams of light,
(What of myself, the same of her I say)
Like me was sister nun; and from her head
The holy filament was torn away.
But to the world, when she against her will
Was carried back, close in her heart she wore
The sacred veil, which there she cherished still.
Great Constance' light is this; who to the blast
Which second came from Swabia's kingdom, bore
The mighty power that proved the third and last."
Thus she addressed me—then began to sing,
"Ave Maria," vanishing from view,—
As through deep water sinks some heavy thing.
Mine eyes, which followed her till out of sight,
When they no longer could their aim pursue,
Turned unto one of more supreme delight,
And wholly gazed on Beatrice; but she
So bright a ray did on my face reflect,
At first I could not bear the intensity;
And hence my eagerness to speak was checked.

117. *i.e.* The religious affection of a woman who, being married against her will, still desires to return to the convent. 118. Daughter of Roger I., King of Apulia. She became a nun in Palermo. She was forced from the convent, and given in marriage to the Emperor Henry VI., son of Frederick Barbarossa, by whom she became mother of Frederick II. 119. Henry VI. 120. Frederick II.

CANTO IV.

ARGUMENT.

Beatrice explains Dante's doubts as to the reason why so low a place is assigned to the Saints he finds in the Moon;—viz. that they had not strictly adhered to their vows.

BETWEEN two viands equidistant placed, 1
And tempting equally, a man might die
Of hunger, ere determined which to taste:
So might a lamb between the cravings stand
Of two fierce wolves, and fear them equally;
So might a dog—a kid on either hand.
Wherefore, indeed, I neither praise nor blame 7
Take to myself, if, urged by equal doubt,
I silent of necessity became.
I spake not—but my face a wish portrayed;
And with more force than I had spoken out,
That wish to speak was by my look conveyed.
And e'en as Daniel did of old, when he 13
Allayed the wrath of the Chaldean king,
Which prompted him to unjust cruelty;
So Beatrice:—"I see thou art possest
By two desires, which into bondage bring
Each other, so that neither is exprest."
Thou arguest:—"If a righteous will remain, 19
Why should the violence by others wrought
Curtail the measure of desert?—Again,
It causes thee to ponder, I discern,
That human souls, as erewhile Plato taught,
Seem to their native planets to return.
These are the doubts by which thy will is swayed 25
With equal force:—to that which doth appear
Most urgent, shall my answer first be made.

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13. As Daniel explained Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and thereby appeased his wrath against the Magi, so Beatrice removed the doubts of Dante. 19. *i.e.* The intention of the Nuns to fulfil their vows—alluding to Piccarda and Constance, in the last canto. 23. Plato taught that our souls were originally distributed among the stars, whither they returned, after the union with the body was dissolved. 27. The answer to the first question commences line 67. In reply to the second, Beatrice here shows that Plato's philosophy is not applicable to heaven; and that angels and spirits are said, humanly speaking, to have different mansions assigned them, merely to show their different degrees of glory.

SOULS RETURNING TO THEIR SPHERES



SEEM TO THEIR NATIVE PLANETS TO RETURN

Not he who of the Seraphim doth most
  Resemble God, not Moses, John, (whiche'er
  You choose to take) or Mary's self, may boast
That they have seats in any other heaven 31
  Than these same spirits thou didst lately see;
  Or that to them a longer life is given.
But they all render the first circle fair,
  And taste the sweet existence diversely,
  As more or less the Eternal Breath they share.
Not that they here displayed themselves, to show 37
  This sphere was their allotment; but intended
  To mark their happiness in sphere so low.
Thus must your understanding be addrest;
  Since solely now by sense is apprehended
  That which hereafter Intellect will test.
Therefore it is, that Scripture condescends 43
  To your capacity, ascribing feet
  And hands to God, though neither it intends.
Hence by the Church are Gabriel, Michael dight
  With human face, and he who left his seat
  In heaven, to renovate Tobias' sight.
What Plato in Timæus had in view 49
  Resembles nought beheld in this our clime,
  Since what he saith, it seems, he thinketh true.
He says that souls to their own star revert,
  Believing them thence taken, at the time
  When with a mortal vesture they were girt.
And haply what in truth he meant, may be 55
  Of different import from the vulgar sense,
  And not to scorn obnoxious;—for if he
Intends unto these circles to impute
  The merit or the blame of influence,
  With bow not wholly devious he may shoot.
Ill understood, this doctrine led of yore 61
  Mankind astray; whence Mercury, and Jove,
  And Mars, became the names that planets bore.
The other doubt that in thy mind holds sway

37. Viz. Piccarda and Constance. 43. The allusion is to the Archangel Raphael. Tobit v. 4. 55. *i. e.* "It may be, that Plato merely attributes an influence to the heavenly spheres—a doctrine, which taken literally, and not in the spiritual sense, formerly led men astray,—causing them to deify heroes, and pay idolatrous worship to stars."

Has less of venom, since it will not prove
Able to lure thee from my side astray.—
That Heavenly Justice should to mortal eye
Appear unjust, affords an argument
To firmer faith, and not to heresy.
But since thy mind has power to comprehend
And pierce this truth, I will thy wish content,
And bring my reasonings to a speedy end.
If violence be, when he who is constrained
Contributes nought to the necessity,
These souls no real violence sustained;
Since will, unwilling, is not to be quenched,
But, like to fire, persists incessantly,
Though thousand times by violence it be wrenched.
Therefore, if more or less it bend,—to force
It gives assistance;—as did these, who ought
Back to the holy place to have held their course.
For had their will been under their command,
Such as kept Laurence on the bars, and wrought
In Mutius, cruel to his own right hand—
Loosed from their bonds, they surely had retraced
The path whence they had forcibly been rent;
But rare indeed is will so firmly braced.
Thus, if my words be rightly apprehended,
Falls to the ground the specious argument
By which thy soul might oft have been offended.
But now thy mind is crossed by other doubt,
Such, that beneath its troublous weight opprest,
Thou would'st, unaided, have been wearied out.
Falsehood, as I before convinced thee, never
May harboured be within a holy breast,
Which near the Primal Truth remaineth ever:
Yet from Piccarda mightest thou have heard
That Constance to the veil was stedfast still;

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69. *i. e.* Were these truths above human comprehension, I would merely exhort you to believe. 97. See last canto, line 117. *i. e.* "What Piccarda there related of Constance seems to contradict my account; but this arises from not considering that there are two species of Will,—one that gives way to expediency—another, that is absolute and unchangeable. Thus Constance might be said to retain in her heart an affection for the veil forcibly torn from her; but she did not encounter death rather than yield, or return to the convent when in her power.'

Which now appears to contradict my word.
Oft it befals, O brother, that to shun
A coming danger, we, against our will,
Do perpetrate what should not have been done:
E'en as Alcmæon, too obedient son,
His mother slew, to please his sire; and hence
Impious became, impiety to shun.
Here it is fitting thou should'st bear in mind
That with the will accords the violence;
And such offences no excuse may find.
Absolute will consents not to ill deed—
So far consenting only, as it fears
Lest, drawing back, worse evil should succeed.
Absolute will is what Piccarda meant;
Another sense the will I spake of bears;
And both gave utterance to a true intent."
Such was the current of that River blest,
Poured from the Fountain whence all truth doth flow;
And both my doubts were wholly laid to rest.
"O Sovereign dearling of the primal Love,
Goddess," I said, "whose speech inflames me so,
That more and more its genial warmth I prove;
Depth of affection have I not, that may
Sufficient be thy favour to requite:
Let Him, who vieweth, and who can, repay.
I see full well the mind can ne'er exist
Content, unless illumed by that True Light,
From whom dissevered may no truth consist.
Therein it rests, like beast within its lair,
Delighted, when 'tis reached: for otherwise
All human efforts unavailing were.
And hence springs Doubt, like to a tender shoot,
At foot of Truth:—from height to height we rise;
Since Nature ever prompteth the pursuit.
This doth invite me, this my heart assure
To ask thee, Lady, with all reverence,

103. Of Alcmæon, "facto pius et sceleratus eodem," (Met. ix. 409.) See Purgatorio, xii. 49. 115. Beatrice—whose eloquence flowed from God. 118. See Spenser,—Hymn to Heavenly Beauty. 127. *i. e.* Within divine truth. Our capacity of arriving at truth, and knowing God, is inferred from our innate desire of knowledge. Without this, our faculties would be bestowed in vain.

Another question which is yet obscure.
I fain would know if vows defective may
Be cancelled by some goodly recompense,
Which in your balance will not lightly weigh."
Then Beatrice, her eyes divinely bright, 139
Sparkling, and full of love upon me threw,
So that, unable to endure the sight,
Mine from her gaze, bewildered, I withdrew.

CANTO V.

ARGUMENT.

Beatrice addresses Dante. He enters the planet Mercury, or second heaven, where a number of Spirits greet him, and offer to answer his inquiries.

"If, wrapt in Love's extatic flame, I glow 1
With splendour not endured by mortal eye,
So that thy powers of sight I overthrow,
Be not amazed; for this effect proceeds
From perfect view of the Divinity,
Who, nearer seen, to love intenser leads.
Within thy mind now kindled are the fires 7
Of the eternal Sun—whose beauteous face,
But once beheld, for ever love inspires:
And if aught else entice thy love astray,
'Tis but some faint misapprehended trace
Of that same Light, transmitting here its ray.
Thou askest whether broken vows may be 13
Redeemed by other service, that has force
To grant the soul a full immunity."
Thus Beatrice began;—then poured along
The holy strain in smooth unbroken course,
Like one who checks not the full tide of song.
"The greatest boon by the Creator given, 19

1. The prostration of the poet before the splendour of Beatrice was the concluding scene of the last canto. 11. "It should be known that the primal Agent, *i.e.* God, paints his virtue upon some things by a direct ray, and upon others by a reflected splendour. Hence the divine Light beams direct upon the Intelligences, and from these is reflected upon other things."—Dante. Convito. See "Material Heavens," &c. prefixed. 13. See canto iv. 136. 19. Here commences the answer to the question asked by Dante, at the end of the last canto.

And most conformed to his benevolence—
That too, most precious in the sight of heaven,
Was freedom of the Will, a gift bestowed
Upon the creatures of intelligence,
Who all,—and they alone,—are so endowed.
Hence if thou argue rightly, will the vow
At its high worth and value be esteemed,
If such, that God consent as well as thou:
For in the compact, sacrifice is made
Of this same treasure, so important deemed;
As in the act spontaneous is displayed.
What compensation then canst thou bestow?
Would'st thou devote to pious deed thy vows—
From stolen wealth thou thinkest good may flow.
One of thy doubts has now been cleared away;
But dispensation since the Church allows,
(Which seems to contradict what now I say)
Still at the table must thou be a guest;
For the harsh food partaken of by thee
Requires assistance, ere it well digest.
Open thy mind to what I now explain,
And store it close; for if thy memory
Retain not what thou learnest, 'tis learnt in vain.
Unto the essence of this sacrifice
Two things belong—the subject matter one,
The other, the agreement;—no device
This last can cancel, and the bond remove,
Save the performance; and what needs be done
Regarding this, hath been enforced above.
Wherefore the Hebrews were in duty bound
To offer, although changed the gift might be,
As in the sacred records may be found.
The subject matter may be of such kind,
As not to fail through insufficiency,
Although a different offering be assigned.
But let not any think, as he may please,
To shift the weight that doth his shoulder strain,
Without the turning of the twofold keys:

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29. *i.e.* Of freedom of the will, spontaneously sacrificed to God, when we adopt His will instead of our own. 57. *i.e.* Without the authority of the Church, represented by the keys, said to be given by our Saviour to St. Peter. See Purg. ix. 118.

And on each change the blame of folly fix,
Unless the gift adopted shall contain
The former one, as four are found in six.
Wherefore, whatever in the balance weighed 61
Makes by its worth all other burdens rise,
May never be by any service paid.
O mortals, offer not your vows in jest;
Be faithful, nor in rashness blind your eyes,
Like Jephthah, by an erring zeal possest;
Who rather should have said: 'I acted wrong,' 67
Than greater guilt incur:—thus reckless too
The mighty leader of the Grecian throng—
Whence her young charms Iphigenia wailed,
And made the ignorant and wise both rue
The day when rites so barbarous prevailed.
Christians, let stedfastness your actions grace; 73
Be not like feathers, blown by every wind,
Nor think all water may your sins efface.
The Testaments ye have, both New and Old;
A Pastor too to guide you is assigned:
Let these suffice; in these your peace behold.
If lust entice you, know that ye are men, 79
Not beasts of reason void: nor let the Jew,
Who lives among you, hold you in disdain.
Be ye not like the foolish, wanton lamb,
That leaves the milk, its gambols to pursue,
Fights with itself, and quits its loving dam."
Thus Beatrice;—then bearing fond desire 85
Marked on her brow, unto that part she turned
Which glows most lively with celestial fire.
Her silence, and the change her countenance wore
Restrained my curiosity, which burned
With eagerness, and questions had in store.
And as an arrow to the mark is driven, 91
Or ere the cord that sent it be at rest,
So swiftly passed we to the second heaven.
Entered within the precincts of the light,

64. "When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it." Ecclesiastes v. 4. 66. See Judges, cap. xi. 80. See Inf. xxvi. 119. 87. *i.e.* The Empyrean—where God more peculiarly dwells. 90. The poet is now rapt to Mercury, the second kingdom, inhabited by spirits who had been active in the pursuit of honour.

I saw my guide's fair countenance possest
With joy so great, the planet glowed more bright:
And if the very star a smile displayed, 97
Well might I smile—to change by nature prone,
And varying still with each impression made.
As in some placid and transparent lake
The fish are drawn to aught within so thrown
That they the specious bait for food mistake;
Thus towards us I beheld in concert move 103
More than a thousand splendours; and each said,
"Behold one here who will increase our love."
And nearer as they severally came,
Their joyousness full clearly was displayed
By the effulgence issuing from each flame.
Think, reader, if the wondrous history 109
That here begins, should also terminate,
How painful would thy dearth of knowledge be:
Then may'st thou tell how far was I possest
By strong desire to understand their state,
The moment they became thus manifest.
"O well-born spirit, called by Grace to explore 115
The Thrones of this eternal jubilee,—
Ere yet thy warfare with the world is o'er;
Know we are kindled by the self-same light
Which filleth heaven; and that kind wish in thee
To know our state we gladly shall requite."
One of those pious spirits thus I heard; 121
When Beatrice: "Speak on without dismay;
And trust, as they were Gods, their every word."
"I see full well how in the Light Divine
Thou dwellest; and thine eyes a joy display,
Which when thou smilest more serenely shine:
But who thou art I know not, neither why, 127
O worthy soul, a sphere is given to thee,
Hid by another's ray from mortal eye."
These words I spake unto the happy light

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116. *i.e.* The Angels celebrating the triumph of Christ. 118. The light is that of charity—as universal in heaven as light itself. 126. Thus translated upon conjecture, before I met with the reading "corruscan" of the Cod. Steward, adopted by Dionisi. 129. Mercury, says Dante in his Convito, is more veiled by the splendour of the Sun, to which it is contiguous, than any other planet.

That first so joyously accosted me;
 Whereat it glowed in radiance yet more bright:
And as the sun conceals himself from view
 Amid the splendour of the new-born day,
 When he hath chased away the early dew;
E'en so that holy form himself concealed
 Within the lustre of his own pure ray;
 And, shrouded closely, to mine ear revealed
Words the ensuing canto shall display.

CANTO VI.

ARGUMENT.

Justinian recites the conquests and successes of the Romans in order to prove the divine right of the Emperors, and the criminality of the Guelfs and Ghibellines;—the one in opposing their government, the other in endeavouring to turn it to party purposes.—Among the inhabitants of Mercury is found Romeo, the unfortunate Steward of Raymond Berenger.

"WHEN Constantine had turned the Eagle back
 Against the course of heaven, which it before
 Had followed closely in Æneas' track,
Above two centuries the Bird of God
 His seat maintained on Europe's utmost shore,
 Near the same mountain where he first abode:
Beneath the shade his sacred pinions cast,
 Passing from hand to hand, the world he swayed;
 And thus to mine descending, came at last.
Cæsar I was—Justinian now am I,
 Who rid the laws, by the Holy Spirit's aid,
 Of all defect and superfluity:
But ere unto that work my mind I bent,
 One nature I to Christ attributed,
 And rested in the erroneous faith content.

131. Justinian. That Dante may not be dazzled, he shrouds himself before he begins his speech.

1. Justinian speaks.—Constantine carried the Eagle, the imperial ensign, from west to east. Æneas, on the contrary, moved with the sun's course, from Troy to Italy. 4. From the entrance of Constantine into Byzantium, to Justinian, is 203 years, *i.e.* from 324 to 527. The bird of God is the imperial Eagle. 6. Constantinople is situated at the extremity of Europe, near mount Ida, where the founders of Rome originally dwelt. 10. *i.e.* "The accidental honour I enjoyed on earth in being an Emperor hath ceased here; and in heaven I am simply Justinian."

But blessed Agapetus bade me abjure
The error; and by counsel sage he led
My wandering thoughts unto a faith more pure.
To him I gave belief; – and now I view 19
His doctrine clearly, e'en as thou may'st see
In every opposite the false and true.
Converted to the Church—by God's high will
And favouring grace, I roused each energy,
And strove the mighty labour to fulfil.
Arms to my Belisarius I consigned; 25
And turned me to repose in peaceful lore,
Seeing the hand of Heaven with him conjoined.
To thy first question have I made reply;
But such its nature is, that something more
Must here be added of necessity,—
That thou may'st see how great the blame of those 31
Who violate the sacred standard's power,
Its false supporters, and its open foes.
Behold what virtue and what deeds renowned
Have made it worthy reverence, from the hour
When Pallas died, its sovereignty to found.
Thou knowest that in Alba it remained 37
Three hundred years and more, until the time
When three opposed to three the fight sustained.
And from the Sabine rape, unto the day
Lucretia wept, thou knowest its deeds sublime,—
Bending the neighbouring people to its sway:
Thou knowest what by Roman worth it wrought 43
'Gainst Brennus, and 'gainst Pyrrhus, and the rest,
Chiefs and confederates who with valour fought:
Torquatus whence, and Cincinnatus (name
Renowned for aye) and those compatriots blest,
The Decii and the Fabii, won their fame.
Down to the ground it brought the Arabian's pride, 49
Who in the train of Hannibal passed o'er

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25. Belisarius, his general, defeated the Goths, and liberated Rome. 31. Having spoken of the Eagle, Justinian is led to mention the Guelfs and Ghibelines, the latter, who adopt it as a standard, and the former who oppose it. 36. Pallas having been killed in the battle against Turnus, made way for Æneas, and thus is said to have been a founder of Rome. 39. The Horatii and Curiatii. 49. *i.e.* The Carthaginians, so styled from their origin.

The Alpine rocks, whence Padus' waters glide.
Beneath it, triumphed in their early prime
Scipio and Pompey:—rudely too it bore
Against the hill, which thou, a boy, didst climb.
Then, near the time when it was willed by heaven
That all the earth should own one peaceful reign,
To Cæsar's hand, by Rome's command 'twas given.
Its glorious deeds from Var unto the Rhine
Iser beheld, and Era, and the Seine,
And all the vales that towards the Rhone incline.
And when, Ravenna leaving, at a bound
It cleared the Rubicon, it took such flight
Nor tongue nor pen its glory may resound.
Thence it directed back its troops to Spain;
Then to Durazzo turned, and so did smite
Pharsalia, that the glowing Nile felt pain.
To Simois and Antandros back its way
It sped, and where great Hector lies at rest;
Then shook its wings to Ptolemy's dismay:
Thundering, it thence on Juba bent its arms;
And turning back revisited your west,
Where Pompey's trumpet sounded forth alarms.
Of what he did who next the ensign bore,
Brutus and Cassius bark in hell; and thence
Modona and Perugia trembled sore.
Still Cleopatra mourns with grievous throes,
Who, hastening to avoid its violence,
A dark and fearful death untimely chose.
With him it travelled to the Red Sea's shore;
With him it hushed the world into a rest
So deep, that closed was Janus' sacred door.
But all the glories that had yet been gained,
Or were to be, beneath that standard blest,
Throughout the mortal realm o'er which it reigned,
Sink into nothing, and become obscure,
If in Tiberius' hands its acts be scanned
With eye acute, and with affection pure.

54. The hill of Fiesole is situated above Florence, the birth-place of Dante. 58 Dante sums up all Cæsar's acquisitions during five years. 86. Dante derives glory to the Eagle that the government of the world should have been entrusted to it at such a time as the crucifixion of our Saviour, and that in the hands of Tiberius it should have thus been

For the just God, who doth my words inspire,
Assigned the mighty task unto his hand
To execute the vengeance of His ire.
Now let my words thy admiration win;—
With Titus next it hastened on to bring
Vengeance for vengeance of the ancient sin:
And when in time the Lombard tusk had gored
The sacred Church—beneath its sheltering wing
Victorious Charlemagne her rights restored.
Now may'st thou form an estimate of those
Whom I before accused; and clearly scan
How great their crimes, the cause of all your woes.
This 'gainst the public banner doth array
The yellow lilies—this a partisan
Would make it;—which most wrong, 'tis hard to say.
Let, let the Ghibelines pursue their arts
With other guidance:—cursed be his head
Who from the honoured standard justice parts.
And let not a new Charles, with Guelphic aid
Abase it; but those talons let him dread,
That have ere now a nobler lion flayed.
Oft do the sons the fathers' penance pay;
Nor let him fondly think that out of love
To his fair lilies God his hand will stay.
Good spirits doth this little star contain,
Who, ever bent upon exertion, strove

an instrument of our redemption. 90. As the crucifixion avenged, or redeemed the sin of Adam, so was the crucifixion avenged by the punishment of the Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus. 94 Desiderius, king of the Lombards, who possessed Italy above two hundred years. He was conquered by Charlemagne. 97. *i.e.* The Guelfs and Ghibelines, mentioned before, line 31; the former supported by France in the person of Charles II. King of Apulia, under whose fleur de lis they arrayed themselves;—the latter by the Emperor, whose influence they endeavoured to turn to their private interests. Dante shows his impartiality by inveighing equally against both factions. 100. It is called "public," since the Emperor reigns for the public good, and must not be expected to favour any party views whatever. 106. Charles II King of Naples.—"Let him remember that the Eagle has abased more formidable foes—that, as his father was an usurper, so he may pay the penalty; and that God will not for his sake prostrate the Eagle before the Lily, *i.e.* will not transfer the empire of the world from Rome to France" 112. From this and the following stanza, it appears that Justinian and those with him had been debarred from ascending to a higher sphere, because they limited their aim to the acquirement of earthly reputation.

The meed of honour and renown to gain.
When our desires conceive such erring aim,
Then must the rays of heavenly Love rebound
With a less vivid and extatic flame.
But in observing how with our rewards
Our deeds agree, our joy in part is found,
Since each with each harmoniously accords.
The living Justice with such even flow
Our passions hence attempers, that they ne'er
May any guilty inclination know
From varied voices dulcet tones arise;
Thus do our graduated mansions here
Amid these wheels form sweetest harmonies.
And in this pearl, so lucidly arrayed,
Shines out Romēo's pure and spotless light,
Whose great and beauteous deeds were ill repaid
But the Provençals who against him strove
Have nought to smile at hapless is the wight,
Ungrateful for another's deeds of love.
Four daughters, each exalted to be Queen,
Had Raymond Berenger:—this grandeur all
By poor Romēo had accomplished been
Yet, moved by slanderous tongues of evil men,
To strict account this just one did he call,
Who rendered back full twelve for every ten.
He left the palace, worn with age and poor;
And had the world but known how he sustained
His hardships, begging crusts from door to door,
Still greater glory had his virtue gained."

125. *i e.* The perfect harmony of heaven will not be interrupted by the variety of its mansions. 128. Romeo was a poor man who, returning from a pilgrimage to St. James of Gallicia, was received into the house of Count Raymond Berenger, in Provence, and being found a man of ability, was raised to places of trust. 133 By a most judicious management of his affairs, he enabled the Count to marry his four daughters to four Kings, viz. Louis IX. of France, Henry III of England; Richard, Henry's brother, King of the Romans; and Charles King of Naples, brother to Louis. 138. An account of his administration was required of him, which he rendered with the greatest punctuality, and showed the extent of his services. 139. It is said that he refused the Count's solicitation to remain; and taking his mule, his staff, and his scrip, parted as poor as he came, and submitted to obtain a livelihood by mendicancy. By the side of this short sketch of Romeo may be set the similar one Dante gives of himself, canto xvii. 5



BEATRICE & DANTE

CANTO VII.

ARGUMENT.

The words of Justinian, in the last canto, having excited doubts in Dante's mind respecting our redemption, they are solved by Beatrice.

"Hail, God of Hosts, enthroned in regions bright,
Who o'er the Spirits of thy kingdom blest
Sheddest the abundance of thy glorious light!"
From that pure substance such high rapture came,
Unto its own resplendent wheel addressed,
Which glowed responsive with redoubled flame.
The others followed as the dance it led;
And, like to sparks that quickly disappear,
Swift in the distance, lost to vision, fled.
Now with myself I mused, to doubt a prey,
'Speak to her, speak; and let thy Lady hear;
That her sweet drops may so thy thirst allay.'
Still with that reverential awe imbued,
Which e'en the letters of her name inspire,
I bowed to earth, like one by sleep subdued.
Nor long remained I so:—for with a smile
That would have comforted one wrapt by fire
Did Beatrice my terror thus beguile:
"To my unerring mind 'tis evident,"
She said, "this is the subject of thy thought,—
How vengeance just could meet just punishment.
But soon thy troublous doubts will I remove;
Do thou attend:—my words with clearness fraught
The mighty sentence shall distinctly prove.—
Adam, submitting not that God should place
A salutary curb upon his will,
Condemned himself, and with him all his race;
Who thence, infirm and weak, e'en from their birth,
For ages lay in error grovelling, till
The Word of God descended upon earth.
Then was the nature, that rebellious strove
Against its Maker, to His person joined

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2. The spirits are in the original called Fires, as glowing with the flame of charity. 6. The flame which represents Justinian, assumes a two-fold appearance, designating his love to God and his neighbour, as shown in his desire to instruct Dante. 21. This refers to the last canto line 93.

By the sole act of His eternal Love.
Now let my argument be understood:—
This nature, as first made, and to the mind
Of its Creator joined, was pure and good;
But into exile of itself was driven
From Paradise, because it turned aside,
Quitting the way of truth, of life, of heaven.
If with the nature then that Christ assumed
The pain be measured that the Cross supplied,
Never was punishment more justly doomed:
But looking unto Him who bore the pain,
And took our nature on Him, no one e'er
Did so unjust a punishment sustain.
To different results one death gave birth:—
God was well pleased,—well pleased the Jews too were:
The Heaven was opened—tremblings shook the earth.
Then ever be prepared with this solution,
Whene'er 'tis said, a just revenge hath been
Visited by a righteous retribution.
But, wandering on from thought to thought, thy mind
Is thralled within a subtle knot, I ween;
Whence an escape thou wouldest most gladly find.
Thou sayest: 'Well comprehend I what I hear;
But wherefore our Redemption to effect
God chose such method, doth not yet appear.'
Brother, this mystery lies deep immured,
And hid from every one whose intellect
Hath never been by love's warm flame matured.
But I will tell thee,—since this point is sought
By many anxiously, and seldom found,—

47. God was pleased in the satisfaction given for the offence of Adam—the Jews in the satisfaction of their rage. 50. Just, as regarding his human nature, yet unjust, as regarding his divine. Just retribution was visited on the Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem. 56. This is the great stumbling block upon which man falls through pride, like his father Adam. As Adam could not understand why he was forbidden to eat of the tree, and therefore was disobedient; so man, unable to comprehend the mystery of godliness in the mode of our redemption, rejects the scheme altogether, or inquires into it with the intellect alone, "not matured by the warm flame of love." He cleaves to his own understanding, instead of abandoning himself with childlike docility to the teaching of his heavenly Father. Dante has solved the difficulty; and Milton has followed him. See Par. Lost, b. iii. 294.

The reason why such mode was worthiest thought.
The heavenly Goodness, that all envy spurns,
Dispenses beauty in an endless round,
As, issuing sparks, the Flame Eternal burns.
What flows immediate from that heavenly Lamp
Endures for aye, since never dies away
The trace once left by its unerring stamp.
What thus immediate from this source is showered
Is wholly free, nor ever may decay,
By secondary causes overpowered.
Greater the likeness, greater His delight;
Since in the object likened to it most
The Holy Flame glows most serenely bright.
To benefit the human creature all
These things contribute; and if one be lost,
From his nobility man needs must fall.
'Tis sin alone his freedom takes away,
And mars his likeness to the Good Supreme,
Lessening the fervour of the heavenly ray:
Nor doth he e'er his dignity regain,
Unless his guilty losses he redeem,
And pay for sinful joys by equal pain.
When your whole nature in its seed transgressed,
Not only was it driven from Paradise,
But of these dignities was dispossessed;
Nor could regain them when it once had lost,
(Search out all modes with skill) in any wise,
Unless the one of these two fords were crossed:—
Either that God alone should wipe away,
In clemency, man's folly; or that he
Should of himself for his own folly pay.

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64. God does not envy his blessings to us. He "giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not." St. James i. 5. 67. *i.e.* Without the intervention of secondary causes. 76. *i.e.* All the prerogatives before mentioned, viz. Immortality, Freedom, and Likeness to God. 79. Man was created in the likeness of God, with a soul not subject to base passions, but pure and innocent, free to look up and admire the excellence of his Creator. This was the pristine state of dignity enjoyed by man till the purity of his soul was marred by the intrusion of sin: when, instead of walking with God, and holding communion with Him, as with a friend, Adam hid himself, and conceived that sinful enmity towards his Father which has since constituted the degradation and misery of the human race.

Now, to my words thy mind attentive keep;
And fix thine eye in stedfast scrutiny
On this, the everlasting counsel deep.—
Man was unfit (his nature bounded so) 97
To pay the mulct, because he could not bend,
Obedient, with humility, so low,
As, disobedient, high he aimed to rise:—
And this the reason why man could not mend
His fallen state himself in any wise.
Behoved it then that God should lead again 103
His creature to pure life by his own ways;—
Either I say by one, or by the twain.
But since the work is deemed of greater worth,
The more the Agent's goodness it displays,
And manifests the heart that gave it birth;
The Good Supreme, whose stamp benign on all 109
His works is written, chose the twofold way
Your fallen race from misery to recal.
Nor in the one or other, since the time
The first sun shone unto the latest day,
Hath been, or shall be, project so sublime.—
Giving himself a ransom for mankind, 115
His bounty God more evidently shewed,
Than if He merely had a pardon signed.
And every other mode had wholly failed,
As short of Justice, if the Son of God
Had not in flesh his God-head humbly veiled.
But that thy every wish I may supply, 121
A former passage will I now explain,
That thou may'st see the truth clear e'en as I.
'Behold the air, the fire, the earth,' you say,
'And water with their mixtures, turn again
Into corruption, and swift pass away:'—
And these were creatures;—whence, if true it be 127

100. When he listened to the words of the devil, "Ye shall be like gods." Gen. iii. 5. Such pride was not to be redeemed by man. It was reserved for our Saviour to "humble himself unto the death of the cross." 105. By the means either of Mercy, or of Justice, or of both. 110. God vindicated his Justice at the same time that he showed his Mercy. 114. That "project," whose consummation the Psalmist anticipated, when he exclaimed: "Mercy and Truth are met together; Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other." Psalm lxxxv. 10.

What I have taught thee of their real state,
They from corruption should be ever free.—
The Angels, Brother, and the sphere serene
In which thou art, may well be called create;
As in their perfect essence may be seen.
But the elements now mentioned—air and earth,
And all things that derive existence thence,
To a created virtue owe their birth.
Create the matter they possess,—create
Was also the informing influence
Within these stars that round them circulate.
All beasts, and every plant with faculty
Of life endued, do from the stars above
Derive their vital power and energy.
Your life doth the Benevolence divine
Infuse direct—and so constrain your love
That ever unto Him it must incline.
Hence for your resurrection may ye ground
An argument,—if rightly you reflect
How our first Parents were in Eden found,
Placed there by cause immediate and direct."

CANTO VIII.

ARGUMENT.

In the planet Venus, the third heaven, Dante meets with his friend, Charles Martel, king of Hungary. He laments that Parents do not bring up their children to those professions to which they are most suited.

The heathen world (such was its fatal dearth
Of knowledge) held belief that Venus' rays
The impulse gave to headstrong love on earth;
Wherefore the nations, who in error strayed,
Not only joined to celebrate her praise,
And honour by their sacrifices paid,
But Cupid, and Dione too confest,

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130. According to the doctrine of those times, the Angels, the heavens, and the soul of man being created immediately by God, are eternal; but the elements, planets, beasts, &c. created by the stars, or by the Angels in them, *i.e.* by secondary causes, are perishable. 140. "The beams of each star are the means by which their virtue descends to things below." Convito Trat. ii. 7. 145. *i.e.* Man having been created immediately by God, must therefore live for ever—his apparent death being merely temporary.

As though she were the mother, he the son;
And said he rested on fair Dido's breast.
From her this prelude who affords to me,
The ancients named the star, that looks upon
The sun in front and rear alternately.
I marked not when within that orb divine 13
I entered, but perceived my entrance there,—
Seeing my Lady with more beauty shine.
And e'en as in a flame a sparkle shows;
And as distinctly voice from voice we hear,
When, one sustained, the other comes and goes;
So other lights beheld I in that light, 19
Circling with more or less celerity,
As beamed the Eternal vision on their sight.
Never from lofty cloud descended wind,
Or visible or not, so rapidly,
But slow would seem its progress and confined,.
Contrasted with those heavenly Lights now seen 25
Advancing towards us from that happy round
Where shine the Seraphim in joy serene.
And in the rear of the impassioned train
Hosanna rang with such extatic sound,
My spirit yearns to catch those tones again.
Then one approaching us began alone: 31
"We all are ready to fulfil thy pleasure,
And to requite thee for thy kindness shown.
We circle ever with the Princedoms blest,—
Our thirst the same, our movement and our measure—
Those powers ye whilom thus on earth adressed,
'Ye who intelligent, the third heaven move;'— 37
Yet, would it please thee, rest will be awhile
As sweet as motion—so intense our love."
When on my Lady reverently bent,
Mine eyes had sought her wishes; and her smile
Had reassured, and filled them with content;
Back to the light that had such promise made 43
They turned anon; and, "Who art thou?" I cried,
My voice, by passionate emotion swayed:
And when I spoke, oh! how divinely bright

37. This is the first verse of one of the canzone of Dante: "Voi che intendendo il terzo ciel movete."—(Convito Trat. ii. c. 7.) "Intelligent," *i.e.* "by the intellect." The third heaven is that of Venus.

Shone that blest spirit, and how amplified,
Through joy fresh added to its own delight!
Embellished thus, it said: "On earth below 49
Short time I dwelt; had it been otherwise,
Less were the weight of now impending woe.
The gladness that around me beams, in cloud
Of dazzling radiance hides me from thine eyes,
Like insect folded in its silken shroud.
Thy love to me was worthily displayed; 55
And had I upon earth been living still,
In more than leaves had been that love repaid.
The left bank which is watered by the Rhone,
When it hath mixt its waves with Sorga's rill,
Me for her Sovereign was prepared to own;
Ausonia's horn too, which its towns of pride, 61
Bari, Gaëta, and Crotona, shows,
Whence Tronto to the sea, and Verdè, glide.
Already on my forehead shone the crown
Of that fair land through which the Danube flows,
When from its German boundaries it comes down:
And beauteous Sicily (with smoke o'ercast, 67
Pachinus and Pelorus' rocks between,
Where on the gulf falls Eurus' keenest blast,
By rising streams of pitch with sulphur blended)
Had still her kings expected to have seen
Through me from Rodolph and from Charles descended,

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49. Charles Martel speaks. He was son of Charles II, king of Naples, and Maria sister of Ladislaus king of Hungary. Ladislaus dying without heirs, Charles Martel was crowned king of Hungary in the life-time of his father, and dying before him, he lost his paternal possessions, which were usurped by his brother Robert, to the exclusion of his sons. This is the loss lamented by Charles Martel in this and the following canto. 55. This friendship of our poet with King Charles Martel does not appear to be mentioned elsewhere. He was however twice ambassador at Naples to the King his father. 57. *i.e.* His love would have been shown by fruits. 60. *i.e.* Provence was prepared to receive me, as my father's heir, had I survived him. 61. *i.e.* The kingdom of Naples, so called as being the extremity or foot of Italy, with which Ausonia is synonymous. 67. *i.e.* "Sicily, darkened by the fumes of Ætna, would have now been governed by my descendants had I lived longer, and so prevented the misrule which caused in Palermo (line 75) the famous Sicilian vespers, when all the French in Sicily were put to death, and Peter of Arragon obtained the government, to the exclusion of the house of Anjou." 72. In 1291, Charles Martel married Clemenza, a daughter of Rodolph of

If evil rule, by which is ever stirred
A subject people, had not caused the cry,
'Death, death,' throughout Palermo to be heard.
And if my brother had the issue known,
No hungry Catalonian poverty
Had brought dislike and damage to the throne.
For surely it behoves him to beware,
Or others for him, lest his bark he sink
By loading her with more than she can bear.
He, of his liberal father the reverse,
Other attendants needs than those who think
Of nothing else but how to fill their purse.
Wherefore, the joy thy words impart to me
Is much increased, my Lord, to think that where
Each good begins and endeth—there by thee
'Tis seen, as by myself; and hence delight
O'erwhelms me also, that thou seest it there,
Where God affords a mirror to thy sight."
"Thy words have made me glad; and since a doubt
They have produced, do thou that doubt erase;
Namely how bitter seed from sweet may sprout."
He answered: "If I can impress thy mind
With but one truth—I will before thee place
That which at present thou dost view behind.—
The Good Supreme, who motion doth dispense,

Austria, by whom he had one son, Charles. These are the Rodolph and the Charles spoken of; *i.e* the father-in-law and son of Charles Martel. 76. While Robert, the brother of Charles Martel, was in Catalonia as hostage for his father during seven years, he contracted friendship with many poor Catalonians. These he brought into Italy, promoted to offices of state, and so alienated the hearts of his subjects. 93. This refers to line 82, where this Robert was said to be degenerate,—such degeneracy exciting Dante's surprise, as contrary to the rule, "Fortes creantur fortibus et bonis." Charles Martel answers, that he will explain the cause. 97. The argument, here begun, and continued to the end of the canto, is as follows:—"Whatever ends are desirable for the well-being of man, are effected by God's providence through the medium of the heavenly bodies and the Intelligences which direct them: and this providential influence, which we call Nature, is unerring in its functions. But society, which requires a variety of talents, could not exist, if all were alike; nor is it expedient that all should possess, as by inheritance, the same temper and talents as their parents. Nature, therefore, interferes to prevent this; and hence the variety we see in the same family; a variety sadly lost sight of by parents in choosing professions for their children."

And bliss through heaven, endues these bodies vast
With power to act as his own Providence:
Nor doth that prescient and self-perfect Mind
Consult the natures only, but forecast
To ensure the permanency of each kind.
Hence whatsoe'er this bow takes aim at, lies 103
Within the reach of its unerring dart;
As arrow to its destined object flies:
Which, were it otherwise, these heavens would show
The effect in exhibitions, not of art,
But of destruction: this may not be so,
Unless the Intelligences which direct 109
These stars, defective are, as also He
Who first originated their defect.
This truth more clearly shown wouldst thou desire?"
"Not now," I said; "since Nature I well see,
In her important functions cannot tire."
He then returned: "Would it be worse for man, 115
With social feelings were he not endued?"
"Yes," I replied, "and thou the cause mayst scan."
"And can he in such social converse dwell,
Unless with divers qualities imbued?"
"No, if thereon your master judges well."
Thus far the spirit his deductions drew, 121
And then concluded: "Different if then be
The effects, the causes must be different too.
Hence one is born a Solon, Xerxes one,
This a Melchisedec, another he
Whose flight through air brought ruin on his son.
The circling nature, which the mortal wax 127
Tempers, makes not one family the same;
And yet it never doth its arts relax.
Hence the twin brothers differed so of yore,
Jacob and Esau—and Quirinus came
From sire so vile that Mars the credit bore.
The nature of the son would ever be 133
Like to the sire, if heavenly foresight had
Not warred against such uniformity.

101. *i.e.* God not only originates the necessary variety in human dispositions and talents, but provides for their continuance. 120. Aristotle. 127. The circling Heavens

What was behind thee now before thee lies;
But still a corollary will I add,
To show how favoured art thou in mine eyes.—
Thwarted by fortune, Nature never thrives, 139
Stunted in growth, like every other seed
That 'gainst an uncongenial climate strives;
And did unthinking mortals upon earth
To Nature's everlasting rules give heed,
There would be no complaint of lack of worth:
But him most suited unto war ye teach 145
His wit to sharpen in religion's cause;
And make a king of him most fit to preach,
Reversing Nature's fundamental laws."

CANTO IX.

ARGUMENT.

Continuing in the planet Venus, Dante holds converse with several spirits.—Cunizza—Folco, the Provençal Poet. He reproves the Pope for his neglect of the Holy Land.

As soon as thy loved sire, Clemenza fair, 1
Had cleared my doubts, the evils he foretold
That his posterity were doomed to bear.
"But hist, and let the years roll on," he said;
"Know this—for more 'tis not for me to unfold—
Just retribution shall not be delayed."
Now had the spirit of that light divine 7
Turned to the Sun which fills it with content,—
That Good Supreme, towards all his works benign.
Ah, miserable souls infatuate!
Whose thoughts on vanity are ever bent,—
Your hearts averted from a good so great!
And lo, another of those splendours, glowing 13
With joy unwonted, now approached in sight,
Desire to please me by its radiance showing.

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136. *i.e.* "I have now fulfilled my promise, (line 96) and placed the truth clearly before you."

1. Dante apostrophises Clemenza, daughter of Charles Martel, wife of Louis X., King of France. 7. He looks up to heaven in confidence that God will accomplish the restoration of his family; upon which Dante contrasts his piety with the infidelity of mankind in general.

The tranquil eyes of Beatrice, intent
Upon me as before, with fond delight,
Gave to my wish untold a kind assent.
"Ah! may my prayer, blest spirit, soon be brought,
Unto its aim," I said; "and let me obtain
Proof that on thee I may reflect my thought."
Whereat the Light, that still to me was new,
Forth from the depth whence issued its late strain,
Answered, like one that joys good deeds to do.
"Within that region of Italia's land
Depraved, 'twixt Venice and the source whence flow
Brenta's and Piave's streams on either hand,
Rises a hill, nor rises to great height,
Whence erst a Torch descending, fraught with woe,
Assailed the country with impetuous might.
From the same root we both derived our birth—
My name Cunizza, here ordained to shine,
Since by this star was I o'ercome on earth.
But joyous I sustain my present lot;
Nor for the faults that brought me here repine;
Although the vulgar comprehend it not.
This dear and shining Gem, that in our heaven
Is nearest me, behind it left a name
That shall not to forgetfulness be given
Five hundred years to come.—Then bear in mind
How eagerly should man aspire to fame,
Since this first life another leaves behind.
Heeds not such argument the multitude
'Twixt Adicë and Tagliamento's tide;
Nor yet by suffering are their hearts subdued:
But with the blood of Padua—(lost are so

21. According to Dante's doctrine, as God sees the thoughts of all created minds, and as the saints see all that is in God; so every saint sees the thoughts of all created minds. 28. On a hill near Padua, dwelt the tyrant Ezzelino III., here likened to a torch. 31. He was brother to Cunizza, the spirit now speaking, who is said to have been overcome by her ruling star; and thus prevented obtaining a higher station. 34. After Lethe has been tasted, no remorse is felt. See line 103. 37. Folco di Marsiglia, a celebrated Provençal Poet. 42. Cunizza's argument is this:—"If a reputation upon earth is so valuable, how much more so an eternity of fame in heaven?" 46. *i.e.* The Paduans shall soon be punished for their unjust attempt to seize Vicenza, and shall dye with their blood the river Bacchiglione.

Her sons to duty) shall the stream beside
Vicenza soon with altered colour flow.
And there where Silè and Cagnano meet,
One domineereth with such lofty head,
That snares are now preparing for his feet.
For her fell Pastor's fraud shall Feltro weep—
Fraud more detestable than ever led
The culprits unto Malta's dungeon keep.
Large must the vessel be which should contain
Ferrara's blood; and wearied be the man
Who weighed it ounce by ounce; and yet for gain
This courteous Priest such presents will not spare,
To prove himself a zealous partizan;—
For gifts like these are customary there.
Above are mirrors, (Thrones ye term them) whence
God's judgments are reflected unto us,
So that our words fail not of evidence."
Ceasing to speak, she now the semblance bore
Of one engaged in somewhat else; and thus
Took on the wheel her station as before.
Known to me now, that other joyous Light
Arrayed itself in robe of wondrous glow,
Like ruby with the sun's effulgence bright.
In those high realms is splendour born of gladness,
As smiles on earth; but in the abyss below
The outward form grows dark from inward sadness.
"God seeth all, blest spirit: and in Him
Thy sight is quickened, so that his desires
Never," I said, "can unto thee be dim:
Thy voice then, which delights the realm of heaven,
In concert tuned with those adoring Fires

49. *i.e.* At Trivigi, Riccardo da Cammino lords it so haughtily that a conspiracy is already on foot to assassinate him. 52. A number of the inhabitants of Ferrara at war with the Pope, flying into Feltro for safety, had been taken prisoners under false promises by the Bishop of that place and cruelly put to death. 54. A tower in which the Pope imprisoned clerical delinquents. 55. *i.e.* Such will be the desire of this Priest to please the Pope, that a large vessel must be required to hold his blood-offerings. 62. *i.e.* Know that the Angels above are like mirrors, so that my prophecy cannot be fallacious. See note line 21. 67. Folco di Marsiglia—a celebrated Provençal Poet, made known to Dante through Cunizza's account of his fame. 77. The Seraphim described (canto viii. 28) as singing Hosanna. Their six wings are mentioned by Isaiah, cap. vi. 2.

[illegible]

To whom six wings are as a raiment given,
Why doth it not to my behest incline? 79
I should not wait thy question, did I scan
Thy thoughts as clearly as thou scannest mine."
"Of all the vales wherein are waters pent,
The largest," (thus the happy soul began)
"Except the sea that girds the continent,
Between discordant shores so long a way 85
Against the solar course is lengthened out,
It makes meridian where the horizon lay.
Upon that valley's shore did I reside,
'Twixt Ebro's stream and Macra's, whose short route
Doth Tuscany from Genoa divide.
Beneath the same meridian Buggia lies 91
As doth the region whence I drew my birth,
Whose harbour once was stained with sanguine dyes:
Folco my name with those who knew me best;
And as this heaven impressed me when on earth,
So now in turn by me it is impressed.
Not Belus' daughter burnt with fiercer flame 97
(Whom both Sichæus and Crëusa rue)
Than I, as long as love my age became;
Nor she, deluded by Demophöon,
The maid of Rhodope, herself who slew;
Nor he whose heart the fair Iole won.
Not that we here repent;—for no offence 103
Is here recalled; but joyous we behold
The foresight and the skill of Providence.
Here we admire the art that turns to good
Such passion, and the Wisdom manifold,
Whence earthly love by heavenly is subdued.
But that thy strong desire, to which this sphere 109
Has given birth, may in content abide,

82. The Mediterranean. The object of the following lines is, to point out the dwelling place of Folco, who was born at Genoa, but resided at Marseilles. He is said to have been much honoured by Richard I. of England, and Raymond of Toulouse. His verses having perished, he lives only in Dante's work. 91. Buggia is a city in the state of Algiers, opposite to, and under the same meridian with Genoa, the place of Folco's birth. The slaughter alluded to is that committed by the Saracens, in 936. 97. Dido. 101. Phyllis. 102. Hercules. 107. The reading "affetto" is adopted.

I must not rest my explanations here.
You would be told who dwelleth in the rays
Of this fair light which sparkles at my side,
Like sunbeam that in tranquil water plays:
Know that within it Rahab peace obtains, 115
And to our order joined, amid the blest
Ranks highest, and supreme distinction gains;
For first of souls was she who in this sphere,
Whereon the shadow of your earth doth rest,
Partook Christ's triumph, and gained honour here.
(It well became Him that in heaven be left 121
A trophy of the victory He bought,
When on the cross his either hand was cleft;)
Because she favoured the first glorious deed
By Joshua in the land of promise wrought;
That land of which the Pope takes little heed.
Thy city (hateful plant of him who first 127
On the divine Creator turned his back,
And sowed the seeds of envy) the accurst
Floren produced and issued; whence have strayed
The sheep and lambs away from the right track,
Since of the Shepherd it a Wolf hath made.
For this, the Gospel now is laid aside, 133
The Fathers too; and the Decretals sought
Alone, as by the margins is descried.
To these both Popes and Cardinals are given;
Nor turn they e'er to Nazareth a thought,
Where spread his wings the Messenger from heaven.
But soon the Vatican, and parts of Rome, 139
Most cherished in the pious memory,
Where Peter's faithful army found a tomb,
Shall from the foul adulterer be free.

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118. Rahab. See Joshua, cap. ii. and Hebrews xi. 31. 119. According to Ptolemy, the shadow of the earth ends in the planet Venus. 120. That achieved by Christ over Satan when he visited the spirits in Limbo. See Inf. iv. 53, and note. 127. Florence is called the 'plant'' of Satan. Envy was most rife there. See Inf. xv. 68. 130 The floren was the gold coin in use at Florence, which the Pope so coveted that he is said to have become a very Wolf. 134. Books of ecclesiastical law, in which Boniface was well versed. 139. The liberation looked forward to is supposed to allude to the death of Pope Boniface. 142. Boniface is called an adulterer from his simoniacal practices. See Inf. xix. 53.

CANTO X.

ARGUMENT.

Ascent to the Sun, or fourth heaven. Dante is encompassed by a wreath of spirits. Thomas Aquinas, one of these, declares the names of the rest.

VIEWING his offspring with that fervent Love 1
Proceeding from the Father and the Son,
The First Great Cause of all below—above—
Hath in such perfect order wrought the whole,
That he whose wondering look is fixed thereon,
Must feel the Godhead thrill his inmost soul.
Raise then thine eyes, O reader, following mine, 7
Up to the lofty wheels, that I may show
Where the two motions, linked in one, combine:
And then become enamoured of the art
Of the Great Master, who admires it so—
His eyes, delighted, ne'er from it depart.
See how the Zodiac is extended thence, 13
Whereon are borne the planets, to convey
Strength to the earth which asks their influence:
And did they not through heaven obliquely run,
Much starry virtue would be thrown away,
And many a motive power on earth undone.
And were or more or less the obliquity, 19
Greatly defective would that order be
Which reigns below, and in the realms on high.
And now, O reader, on thy bench recline,
Pondering the feast that is prepared for thee;
So will delight, not weariness be thine.
Feed now;—before thee have I placed the fare; 25
Since that which I have tasked myself to write
Demands from me my undivided care.—
Nature's great minister, (whose ray sublime
Imprints the world below with heaven's own might,
And, regulating all things, measures time,)
Entering the sign that has been named before, 31
Amid these spires his circling journey ran,

9. The Sun, to which they were ascending, was then in Aries, at the point where the zodiac and equator intersect each other. 31. The Sun entering Aries. "According to our poet's system, the earth is motionless, and the sun passes by a spiral motion from one tropic to another." Cary.

Where daily he advances more and more:
And I was with him; nor perceived I ought
Of my increased ascent, more than a man
Perceives, ere it arise, his primal thought.
But wonder not; for Beatrice, loved guide, 37
Impels from good to better with such speed,
That not by time her actions may be tried.
To tell what forms, self-radiant, on my sight
Shone in the sun, distinguished not indeed
By different hue, but by their greater light,
(Though art, though genius should my pen inspire 43
To aid imagination) were in vain;
But Faith may yet conceive, and Hope desire.
Nor is it wondrous if our fantasies
Unequal be such lofty height to gain;
Since o'er the sun soared never mortal eyes.
Such the fourth mansion of the Holy One, 49
Who ever doth its happiness renew,
Showing his holy Spirit, and his Son.
Then Beatrice began: "Thy thanks be given—
Thy thanks unto the Sun of Angels, who
Hath raised thee to this bright abode in heaven."
Never was heart of man so wholly brought 55
Through heavenly love and through desire unmixed
To render up to God its every thought,
As mine, soon as these words my bosom thrilled:
And all my affection was on Him so fixed,
That Beatrice no more my spirit filled.
Nor ought displeased was she; but as she smiled, 61
Such brightness from her radiant eyes came down,
My mind from that sole object was beguiled.
Round us, as round a centre, I beheld
Full many a living lustre form a crown,
Whose vocal sweetness e'en their light excelled.
Oft cinctured thus Latona's daughter reigns, 67
What time so charged with moisture is the air
That she the texture of her zone retains.
In Heaven's high court, whence I my steps retrace,
Are many precious Gems serene and fair,

34. So swift was his ascent to the sun, that Dante could not perceive his progress, and was sensible of his arrival only.

Which may not be extracted from their place;
And like to these was that celestial strain :—
Vain, without wings to seek such melody,
As to seek tidings from the dumb were vain.
These glowing suns thus pouring forth the song,
Around us circled thrice, as in the sky
Whirl stars that unto steady poles belong.
Ladies they seemed, not from the dance set free,
But pausing for new notes,—with fond desire,
Until they catch them, listening silently:
And words like these from one of them I heard:
"Since the bright ray of grace (whence love's true fire
Once kindled, to fresh warmth is ever stirred)
Such ardent glow unto thy spirit lends,
That it conducts thee upward by that stair
Which every one remounteth who descends,—
He is not free (unless a stream be free
That runs not seaward) who denies a share,
In this thy thirst, of his own wine to thee.
You wish to know what flowers this wreath compose,
Viewed by that Lady with admiring gaze
Who gives thee strength, while heaven's high path she shows.
One of the Lambs of that blest flock was I
Which Dominic so leads in righteous ways,
They thrive, unless they fall through vanity.
He who is nearest to me on the right
Was Albert, my erewhile instructor—who
Lived at Cologne: Aquinas am I hight.
And wouldest thou know the names of all the rest,
Turning thine eyes as I direct thy view,
Look up throughout the garland of the blest.
From Gratian's smile that other flame doth rise,
Who to both Forums such assistance bore,

74. *i.e.* "To expect to mount up, without the wings of Faith and Hope, is to expect to understand things inexplicable." 82. From Thomas Aquinas. See line 99. 87. An allusion to Jacob's ladder. "It is impossible for a heart that has once tasted the delights of Paradise to attach itself again to earth."—Lombardi. 90. *i.e.* That he cannot refuse to give him the information he desires. 98. Albertus Magnus, instructor of the celebrated Thomas Aquinas. 103. Graziano di Chiusi, a Benedictine monk.—He wrote a book on the civil and canon law; the "two Forums" referred to.

That favour he obtains in Paradise.
The other, of our choir the ornament,
Was that Lombardo, who, like her of yore,
To holy Church his treasure did present.
The fifth light, fairest amid all our fires,
Breathes forth such love, that all the world below
To gain some knowledge of its fate desires.
Within it is that luminary seen,
Which Heaven so richly did of old endow,
If truth be truth, its like hath never been.
Nearer, that radiant taper meets thy view,
Who in the flesh, the nature and the state
Of Angels with acutest vision knew.
And in that other little light behold
His smile, of Christian fanes the advocate,
From whom Augustine took his lore of old.
Now if thy mental eye be guided round
From light to light, as I record their praise,
The eighth well worth attention will be found:—
Within it dwells, all excellence beholding,
The holy soul who showed the world's dark ways;—
To those who listen, its deceits unfolding.
Down in Cieldauro lies the earthly frame,
From martyrdom and banishment whence freed,
To this calm land of peace his spirit came.
Flaming beyond, the ardent spirit scan
Of Isidaurus, venerable Bede,
Riccardo, in ripe judgment more than man.
This flame, from whom thine eye reverts to me,
Is one, who, pondering mortal follies, thought

107. Pietro Lombardo was a famous writer on Theology, who on dedicating his work to the Church, assimilated himself to the poor widow who gave her two mites. 109. Solomon,—whose destiny, whether to heaven or hell, has been long questioned among Divines. 114. *i.e.* If the Bible is true. "Lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart, so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee." 1 Kings iii 12. 115. Dionysius the Areopagite. See canto xxviii. 130, and "Material Heavens." 119. Paulus Orosius.—He wrote a book against Heresy, dedicated to St. Augustine, who made use of it in his works. 125. Boethius.—From his work, De Consolatione Philosophiæ, Dante took many ideas, and in his Convito calls him his Comforter and Instructor. He suffered a violent death under Theodoric, King of the Goths, and is supposed to have been buried in the Church of St. Peter at Pavia, called Ciel d'oro—now Cielaureo.

That death's approach was made too tardily,—
Sigieri's clear and everlasting light;—
Who in the street of straw, as erst he taught,
Raised, by the truths he told, invidious spite.
Then, like a clock that summons us away, 139
What time the Spouse of God at matin hour
Hastes to her Husband, for his love to pray,—
And one part urges on the other, sounding
Tin Tin in notes so sweet, that by its power
The soul is thrilled, with pious love abounding;
So I beheld that glorious circle move, 145
And with such sweet accord and harmony
Take up the song of praise, as none may prove,
Save where is joy through all eternity."

CANTO XI.

ARGUMENT.

Dante exclaims against the vanity of earthly pursuits, on the occasion of Thomas Aquinas continuing his speech against the modern Dominicans, in which a history is given of St. Dominic and St. Francis.

O THE insensate labour men bestow 1
On worldly things!—how weak those reasonings are
Which make them stoop their wings to earth below.
One was pursuing medicine,—one a course
Of law;—the Church employed another's care;
One strove to rule by sophistry or force;
One was on wicked gains by fraud intent; 7
By merchandize another; this one given
To sensual joy, on ease another bent;—
When I from all these earthly cares relieved,
With Beatrice ascending into heaven,
Was in that sphere so gloriously received.
And in the circle, when each one had taken 13
The station which it occupied before,
Like candle in a candlestick, unshaken,

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136. Sigieri was a divine who taught at Paris in a street where straw for horses was sold. 140. The Church.

1. Speaking of men's various pursuits, Dante, in his Convito, says, that "one man takes one path, and another another, but one path alone is that which conducts us to our peace." Trat. iv. 22.

Within that light which first addressed me, while
Its brightness was increasing more and more,
I heard these accents uttered with a smile:
"As looking on the Eternal Light I burn,
So in the lustre of its glowing ray
Do I the reasonings of thy mind discern.
Thou doubtest, and wouldest have me frame my speech
So clear and undisguised, that what I say
The level of thy reasoning powers may reach,
Where lately I observed, 'They thrive;' and where
I also said, 'Its like hath never been,'
There a distinction must be drawn with care.
The Providence, inscrutable and wise,
Whose counsels are more deep than may be seen
By utmost stretch of mortal faculties;—
To the intent and holy end that She,
Whose spousals were confirmed with cries and blood,
(Herself secure and firm in faith) might be
More closely to her loving one allied—
Appointed two Conductors, each endued
With heavenly strength to be to her a guide.
Effulgence like the Seraphim one showed;
The other—such his wisdom upon earth—
Like to the Cherubim in lustre glowed.
Of one will I discourse, since of the two,
In praising one, do I declare the worth;
For both preserved the self same end in view.
Betwixt Tupino, and the stream descending
Down from that hill the blest Ubaldo chose,

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25. *i.e.* In the last canto, line 96. The view there given of the vanity of the modern Dominicans causes a doubt in Dante's mind as to St. Dominic. This, Aquinas proceeds to solve, by giving a laudatory history of St. Francis, declaring that St. Dominic was a colleague worthy of him, and showing him that St. Dominic was not answerable for the degeneracy of his followers. 26. See canto x. 114. This second doubt is explained in canto xiii. 34:—"the distinction drawn" being, in what sense Solomon is called incomparable. 31. The Church—espoused to our Saviour in His passion. 35. St. Francis d'Assisi, and St Dominic—the one, founder of the order of the Frati Minori, and the other, of the Frati Predicatori. For a full account of these two eminent men, see Neander's Church History (Bohn's Edition), Vol. vii. p. 372, 375, also p. 80, &c. 43. The situation of Assesi, or Ascesi, where St. Francis was born in 1182, is described as between the streams of Tupino and Chiassi, to which St. Ubaldo retired.

A fertile tract is from the mount depending;
Whence to Perugia heat and cold do come,
Through Porta Sole; and behind it those
Of Nocera and Gualdo mourn their doom.
On that side where the mountain falls away 49
Most gently, to the world a Sun was born,
As from the Ganges springs the solar ray.
Whoso would therefore call the place aright,—
Let it no longer of its fame be shorn,
And Orient, not Ascesi, be it hight.
Not long the period from his glorious birth, 55
When, with extraordinary virtue blest,
This wondrous Sun began to comfort earth;
Bearing, while yet a child, his father's ire,
For sake of her whom all as death detest,
And banish from the gate of their desire.
Before the spiritual court, before 61
His father too, he took her for his own;
From day to day then loved her more and more.
Twelve hundred years had she remained, deprived
Of her first Spouse, deserted and unknown,
And unsolicited till he arrived.
Nor did it aught avail, that at the sound 67
Of that dread voice, which all the world dismayed,
She, with Amyclas, fearless still was found.
Nor aught availed the unshaken hardihood,
Which she, the cross ascending, had displayed,
While at the foot the Virgin mother stood.
But lest my language be not clearly seen, 73
Know, that in speaking of these lovers twain,

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48. Towns oppressed by Perugia, situated below the hill. 54. According to Buonaventura, who, in his life of St. Francis, appropriated to him the words of St. John: "I saw another Angel ascending from the rising of the sun," &c. 59. *i.e.* For the sake of Poverty. See line 75. He is said to have been beaten by his father for throwing away money. 61. About the year 1207 he renounced all earthly possessions. 64. From the time of our Saviour to that of St. Francis, *i.e.* above 1100 years, Poverty is said to have had no husband. 67. *i.e.* Men had not been induced to embrace Poverty, by the example of Amyclas, the poor fisherman who slept securely in the neighbourhood of hostile armies, and heard without alarm the voice of Cæsar. See Lucan, Phars. v. 504. Dante refers to this story in his Convito, and adds: "What dislike does every one bear to the possessor of riches!" Trat. iv. 13.

Francis and Poverty henceforth I mean.
Their joyful looks, with pleasant concord fraught,
Where love and sweetness might be seen to reign,
Were unto others cause of holy thought;
So that the sainted Bernard first began 79
Barefoot to run in quest of bliss so sweet;
Yet seemed to advance too slowly, though he ran.
(O unknown riches, O true source of good!)
Egidius and Sylvester, with bare feet,
Pleased with the Bride, the Bridegroom next pursued:
Thence, with his Spouse, and with the holy train 85
Which, following him, had put the girdle on,
That Lord and Father did his way maintain.
Nor aught to waver was his courage seen,
That he was son of Peter Bernardon,
And in appearance wonderfully mean;
But with a royal spirit he revealed 91
His hardy purpose unto Innocent,
Who first the vow of his religion sealed.
And when augmented was the lowly train
That followed him with poverty content,
Whose wondrous life deserves an Angel's strain,
The leader of this venerable band 97
Saw crowned again his wish successfully,
Through the blest Spirit by Honorius' hand.
Then, as by thirst of martyrdom impelled,
In the proud presence of the Soldan, he
Preached Christ, and those his doctrines who upheld.
Finding the people yet unripe to hear 103
The word of Truth, he, for lost moments grieving,
Turned back again, the Italian fruit to rear.
Near to the Arno, on the rigid stone,
He followed Christ, those cruel marks receiving

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79. "St. Bernard first followed this example of St. Francis." 83. Two of the followers of St. Francis. 85. "Thence," *i.e.* "from his country," St. Francis (styled "Lord and Father," as the founder and master of the Order) proceeded to Rome, unabashed by his low birth, and accompanied by his Spouse and family, *i.e.* Poverty and her followers, who wore the girdle. 91. In 1214, Innocent sanctioned the establishment of his order. 98. This was confirmed by Honorius III. 106. *i.e.* On mount Alverna in the Appenines, between the Tiber and the Arno. There he perfected his sufferings, and inflicted on himself the stigmata, representing the wounds of Christ, which were found on his body at his death.

Whose seal upon his limbs two years was shown.
When God was pleased unto Himself to take 109
So true a servant, and reward the cares
Of one devoutly humble for his sake,
His dearest Lady recommended he
Unto his brethren, now his rightful heirs,
And bade them love her with fidelity:
And from her breast with joyfulness took flight 115
His glorious spirit, as it homeward hied;
Nor for his body asked he other rite.
Judge now of him who was esteemed to be
A colleague fit St. Peter's bark to guide
Through the dark billows of a stormy sea.
Such was our Patriarch.—Wherefore he is wise 121
Who shapes his course as he has led the way,
Laden alike with goodly merchandise.
But now so greedy are his flock become
Of novel food, they needs must go astray
To seek new pastures far away from home:
And in proportion as they quit the track, 127
Which they were once accustomed to pursue,
Emptier of wholesome food do they come back.
Some, fearing harm indeed, for safety's sake,
Draw to their Pastor's side; but these so few,
That little cloth would all their garments make.
Now, if intelligible be my word; 133
If thou hast listened me attentively,
And thou remember well what thou hast heard,
In part, at least, thy wish has found content:
These splinters have displayed the root to thee;
And the Dominican learns what is meant,
By that 'which thrives if free from vanity.'" 139

CANTO XII.

THE ARGUMENT.

Thomas Aquinas having finished the history of St. Francis, Bonaventura commences that of St. Dominic.

Soon as the blessed Flame drew near the bound 1
Of its discourse,—spontaneously impelled,

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119. The Church. 138. See canto x. 96.

1. Thomas Aquinas.

The sacred Wheel began to turn around:
Nor had it made one revolution yet,
Ere, circling it, another I beheld—
While step and song in mutual concert met;—
Song as superior to our humble Nine, 7
And which as far our Sirens doth excel,
As primal light its reflex doth outshine.
As when her handmaid Juno summons, rise
Two arches of like hue and parallel,
Drawn out on fleecy cloud athwart the skies—
The outer springing from the inner one, 13
Like to the voice of that fair Nymph who strayed,
Consumed by love, as vapours by the sun;
(Whence men on earth a sure reliance found
Upon the covenant with Noah made,
That never shall the world again be drowned)—
E'en so the twofold Garland turned to us,— 19
Of roses formed, that bloom eternally;
And one with the other corresponded thus.
Soon as the sound of dance, and song, according
To such glad movement, and the revelry
Of light to light fresh brilliancy affording,
With one consent were in a moment still, 25
Like eyes whose movements simultaneous are,
Opening and shutting at the mover's will;—
From one of those new splendours came a sound,
Whence e'en as turns the needle to the star,
To see its whereabout, I turned around.
It then began: "The love which makes me fair 31
Bids me record that other chief, whose fame
My leader hath been mindful to declare.
Memory the record of the twain should keep;
That as both warred together, so the name
Of both like harvest of renown should reap.—
Christ's blessed army, which to reunite 37
Cost him so dear, was now advancing on,

3, The "sacred Wheel" is the wreath of spirits who encircle the poet, and revolve around him. 14. Echo, who was consumed by love of Narcissus. 28. The spirits of the second circle, which lately encompassed the first. Of these, the one who speaks is Buonaventura,—*i.e.* a Franciscan praising St. Dominic,—and Aquinas, a Dominican praising St. Francis.

Tardy and few, and ill prepared for fight;
When the great Emperor provision made
For his endangered host, through grace alone
Not for their merit;—and (as hath been said)
Raised up two champions to his Bride's relief,
Who, both in argument and action bold,
Gathered the scattered people to their Chief.
In that fair clime where springs from out the west
The gentle wind that bids the leaves unfold,
Whence Europe sees renewed her flowery vest;
Not distant from the beating of the waves,
In rear of which at times (his ardour stayed)
The setting sun his ample forehead laves—
The happy Callaroga hath her site
Beneath the massy shield's protecting shade,
Where yields one lion, one displays his might:
There the courageous loving Knight arose,
Who wrestled for the Christian faith, and brought
Good will to friends, but terror to his foes.
And while he yet was in his mother's womb,
With living virtue was his mind so fraught,
He made her prophesy of things to come.
What time 'twixt him and Faith completed were
The espousals at the sacred font, where they
Enriched each other with a dower most rare—
She who for him made promise in her sleep,
Saw the rich fruit that on a future day
The world from him and from his heirs should reap:
And that his mission high might be proclaimed,
Through the inspiration of the Spirit, he,
From his Possessor, Dominic was named;—
For he was wholly His.—With patient toil
He in Christ's garden wrought incessantly,

43. *i.e.* God brought to the aid of his Spouse, the Church, "two champions,"—St. Francis and St. Dominic. See note to last canto, line 35. 46. Spain—the country of St. Dominic. 52. There, in Castile, stands the tower of Callaroga, protected by the King of Castile, in whose coat of arms are represented two lions, one upon a castle, the other under a castle; and this was the birthplace of St. Dominic. 60. *viz.* A strange dream as to her unborn son. 64. His godmother dreamt that he had a star on his forehead, and on the nape of his neck, whence both the East and the West were illuminated.—Ventur. 69. "Dominicus," the possessive of Dominus, *i.e.* "belonging to the Lord."

A chosen help to cultivate the soil.
He seemed indeed the trusted friend of Christ;
For the earliest wish and love that he displayed
Was after the first counsel given of Christ.
Awake, yet silent—stretched upon the earth,
His nurse oft found him; e'en as though he said,
'This is the destined object of my birth.'
Happy his father, truly Felix hight!
O mother, justly also called Joanna!
If man interpreted her name aright.
Not for the honours of the world he strove,
Studying Ostiense; but the real manna,
Which others disregard, so waked his love,
Pre-eminent in learning did he shine,—
Tending that Vineyard which soon comes to shame,
If careless be the dresser of the vine:
Nor of the See, that once her bounty gave
Unto the godly poor, (not her's the blame,
But his, who doth the Holy seat deprave)
Asked dispensation for unrighteous gain,
Nor the first benefice that might befal;
Nor tithes, the poor's possession, sought to obtain;
But 'gainst an erring world craved leave to fight
For that blest Seed, whence won their glory all
The Plants that gird thee with a zone of light.
With learning and determined will, his course
Of apostolic duties he began;
Like torrent gushing from a lofty source.
And wheresoever most prevailed the stocks
Of heresy, full ardently he ran,
Directing there his most impetuous shocks.
From him did many streams their source derive,
Watering the universal garden thence;
So that his tender trees the better thrive.

75. "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor," &c. Matt. xix. 21. 75. Whenever Dante uses the word Christo as a rhyme, which he does four times in the Paradiso, he always repeats it as a rhyme; see xiv. 104; xix. 104; xxxii. 85. 79. Felix Gusman was father of St. Dominic.—His mother was called Joanna, signifying 'full of grace.' 83. A commentator on the Decretals. 90. The Pope. 96. *i.e.* The twenty-four glorious souls that formed the circle or garland, with which Dante was surrounded. 104. The Church.

If such, one wheel of the resplendent car
Wherein the Church advanced to her defence,
And drove victorious in her civil war,
The excellence of the other should full well
Be evidenced,—of which, before I came,
Aquinas was so courteous as to tell.
But the old mark which the circumference wore,
With that frequented now is not the same;—
The generous wine is generous now no more.
His family, which followed in the track
His footsteps made, are gone so far astray,
That where he made advance, they wander back.
But to this evil crop shall quickly come
The harvest, when the tares shall rue the day,
And from the barn excluded, meet their doom.
He who would search our volume's every fold,
In some few pages still perhance might read,
'I am the same I ever was of old:'
But comes not from Casale such an one,
Or Aquasparte;—those the text exceed,
Making it stricter—these would keep to none.
Buonaventura's soul am I, who came
From Bagnoregio, and with pure intent
Preferred each heavenly to each earthly aim.
Agostine, and Illuminato here—
First of those poor ones who barefooted went,
And in the cord by God accepted were.
Ugo is here, and Peter Mangiadore,
Peter of Spain with his twelve volumes too;
And with them Nathan, prophet famed of yore.
There Chrysostom the metropolitan,
Archbishop Anselm, and Donatus, who
In the first rudiments instructed man.
Raban is here: and by my side see him
Endowed with soul of heaven-taught prophecy—
Calabria's famous Abbot Joachim.

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106. St. Dominic. 109. St. Francis, lauded by Thomas Aquinas in the last canto. 112. *i.e.* They follow not the rules of their predecessors. 114. Good old habits are corrupted. 121. *i.e.* Few may be found of the original stamp,—some relaxing the rules of the order—others enforcing them too strictly. 130. Two of the first followers of St. Francis.

Of such a champion to record the praise
  Have I been moved by the warm courtesy
  Of Friar Aquinas, and his goodly phrase;
Which also moved this circling company."

CANTO XIII.

ARGUMENT.

Thomas Aquinas, continuing his speech shows that when he said of Solomon, "his like hath never been," he spoke of him as a king only—and in no way affecting the superior attributes of our Saviour.

Let him who would conceive what met mine eye,
  And stamp the image that I fain would trace,
  Fixt as a rock within his memory,
Imagine fifteen stars selected out
  Of heaven's expanse, so vivid as to chase
  All gloom away, and darkness put to rout;—
Imagine the great Bear, which day and night
  Bides in our heaven, and, as its circles roll,
  Remains still visible to mortal sight;—
Imagine too the opening of that horn,
  Which springs uprising from the very pole,
  Round which the "Primum mobile" is borne,
In twofold signs arranged along the sky,
  After the manner Ariadne taught,—
  What time she felt herself about to die—
The one the other's rays encompassing,
  And each in circles of such fashion wrought,
  That one within the other forms a ring—
And thus a shadowy outline will be found
  Both of the twofold dance, and chaplet bright,
  Which circled, where I stood, the Point around.
For earthly beauty is exceeded there,
  E'en as the heaven that whirls with swiftest flight
  Is with Chiana's stream beyond compare.
No Pæan there, no Bacchic song they raise;
  But the three Persons of the Trinity,
  And the two natures joined in one, they praise.
The song and dance completed, now they bend

12. See "Material Heavens." 14. When Ariadne was about to die, the garland round her head is said to have been changed by Bacchus into a wreath of stars. 24. A river of Tuscany of slow current

THE ADORATION OF THE TRINITY



On us their holy eyes; then joyfully
Hailing each other, to their tasks attend.
'Mid the accordant lights then silence brake 31
That one, which of the lowly man of God,
And of his wondrous story lately spake.
"When from one sheaf hath been obtained the grain,"
It said, "and when that hath been safely stowed,
Love bids me from the other, seed obtain.
Thou deemest that in the breast from which of yore 37
A rib was torn to form her cheek so fair,
Whose appetite the world hath rued full sore—
In that too, pierced by lance, which for past time
And present too, such breaches did repair,
And more than counterbalance every crime,
Was planted whatsoe'er of light is given 43
To our degraded nature, by His might
Who made the twain—the Governor of heaven:
Thou marvellest that of the spirit seen
In yon fifth star, with saintly lustre dight,
I said erewhile, 'Its like hath never been.'
Open thine eyes while I reply to thee; 49
And what I say, and thou believest true,
Meeting as in a centre wilt thou see.—
All things created—both of heaven and earth—
Are but the beam of His idea, who
By love paternal calls them into birth:
For that most living Light, proceeding ever 55
From its high Author, though not separate,
And from the trinal Love disparted never,
Collects its rays as in a mirror, thence
Forming the nine subsistences—and yet
Eternally remaining One: and hence,

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32. *i.e.* Thomas Aquinas, who had related the history of St. Francis in the tenth canto. 34. Having solved one question, he proceeds to answer another. 37. "You believe that Adam and Christ, being both made immediately by God, were endued with all the perfections of which human nature is capable. Wherefore you cannot understand how I, speaking of Solomon, (line 46) could say, 'Its like hath never been.' Lombardi. See canto x. 114. Dante confirms the truth of this belief in the long digression from line 37 to 88; when the original question is resumed. 55. The Word. 59. The nine Heavens. (See "Material Heavens.") From these the ray of God is said to be reflected to the lower orders of beings, till at last it produces the short-lived creatures.

Descending into lower powers than these, 61
By repetition it is brought so low,
It makes no more than brief contingencies:
I mean things generated, which (their birth
Whether to seed, or not to seed they owe)
Heaven, as it whirls, produces upon earth.
Their wax, and He who shapes it, are howe'er 67
Of different kind; whence 'neath the Ideal Seal,
Various degrees of lustre must appear.
Thus it befals, that trees the same in kind
Fruit sometimes better, sometimes worse reveal;
Hence man is formed with varied powers of mind.
More exquisitely if the wax were moulded, 73
(The heavens exerting all their energies,)
Then would the Seal's full lustre be unfolded.
But Nature doth a scant supply impart,
Like Artist, who unto his work applies
A trembling hand, though practised in his art.
If then the ardent Love, the omniscient Eye 79
Of the first Cause shall stamp what they design,
Complete perfection they must needs supply.
Of animal perfection thus the earth
Was erst made worthy;—thus the Maid divine
Conceived the offspring of her wondrous birth.
And your opinion hence do I maintain, 85
That human nature never such was found,
Or shall be, as experienced in the twain.
How then without an equal Solomon?
Here to my reasoning if I placed a bound,
Thou would'st return to question me anon:
But that my doctrine thou may'st understand, 91
Think who he was, and by what impulse taught,
When told to 'ask,' he proffered the demand.

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67. *i.e.* Matter, and the Virtue or Intelligence that acts upon it. 68. The impress of the Divine Idea, or Word. 70. By "trees" are intended human creatures. "We see many men so vile, and in such a degraded state, that they appear nothing better than beasts; and hence we may lay down, and fully believe that some may be so noble, and of so exalted a nature that they can be, as it were, only angels." Dante, Convito. 82. Referring to Adam and Christ. 87. Adam and Christ. 93. "Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad. And God said unto him, Because, &c. Lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart;

From this my speech, thou may'st discern full well
He as a King the gift of wisdom sought,
That he in kingly virtues might excel.
The number of the angelic host to know
He cared not; or if from contingency
Necessity in part may ever flow;
Or whether there be self-existent motion,
Or whether in half-circle there may be
Triangle not rectangular: a notion
Hence, rightly weighed, my answer may impart,
That royal prudence I alluded to;
And aimed at this was my intention's dart.
And if my words thou scrutinize with care,
Thou'lt see that they have only kings in view;
And they are numerous; but, good ones, rare.
Draw this distinction, and my speech is quite
Consistent found with that thou dost believe
Of our first father, and our Chief Delight.
Let this be lead unto thy feet; that slow
Thy steps may be (as of one tired) to give
When not convinced by sight, a yes or no.
For sunk is he 'mid fools in lowest place,
Who no distinction makes, and to the same
Conclusion doth arrive in either case.
Since popular opinion is inclined
Erroneous judgments oftentimes to frame,
Self-love comes in, the intellect to blind.
Worse than in vain doth he from shore depart;
For he returns not what he was before,
Who fishes for the truth without the art:
And this from ancient names is evident—
Parmenides, Melissus, many more,
Who searched for truth, not knowing where they went;
Brissus, Sabellius, Arius, and a score
Of fools, who swords unto the Scriptures were,
Making that crooked which was straight before.

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so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee." 1 Kings iii. 9, &c. 98. *i.e.* He cared not for Astronomy, Logic, Metaphysics, or Geometry. 104. "And this is that gift, which Solomon, seeing that he was appointed to the government of the people, asked of God." Dante. Convito, Trat. iv. cap. 27.

Then to your judgments give ye not the reins
With too much eagerness, like him who ere
The corn be ripe, is fain to count the grains:
For I have seen the thorn through winter snows 133
Look sharp and stiff—yet on a future day
High on its summit bear the tender rose:
And ship I've seen, that through the storm hath past,
Securely bounding o'er the watery way,
At entrance of the harbour wrecked at last.
Let not Ser Martin or Dame Bertha say— 139
Seeing one steal, another sacrifice—
That they have looked into the judgment day:
For still the one may fall, the other rise."

CANTO XIV.

ARGUMENT.

Solomon removes Dante's doubts as to the state of glorified spirits In the planet Mars, to which they now ascend, are seen the forms of distinguished warriors, studded in the figure of a cross.

FROM rim to centre, or reversely, flows 1
Water within a bowl, as outwardly
Or inwardly it be impelled by blows;
Such on a sudden was the twofold thrill,
That, passing through my mind, was felt by me,
Soon as Aquinas' glorious voice was still—
The effect of likeness 'twixt his words and those 7
Of Beatrice, who after him anon
Addressed me, as my verse ensuing shows.
"Him it behoves, although not yet forsooth
He utters it, or even thinks thereon,
To probe unto the root another truth.—
Inform him if the light that doth endow 13
Your substance as with blossoms, will remain,
And with you shine eternally as now:
And if it stays, say how, when ye are dight
With visible integuments again,

139. Names used for any persons who have more curiosity than discretion.—Here Dante appears to reprove those who would doubt as to the salvation of Solomon, whom he has placed in Paradise. See x. 109. The warning however is general; nor should the conciseness of Dante's manner cause so admirable an argument for charity to be overlooked.

The exceeding lustre will not hurt your sight."
As when by gladness prompted and incited, 19
They who keep up the dance in circling ring
Their voices raise, and movements show delighted;
So, at that beauteous Maid's devoted prayer,
The sacred circles, joy exhibiting,
Danced in a round, and chanting, thrilled the air.
He who laments that man on earth must die, 25
Ere he may live in heaven, hath little known
The calm refreshment of the shower on high!
The One, composed of Three, who lives for ever,
And reigns for ever, Three and Two in One,
Restricting all,—Himself restricted never,
Had thrice been chanted by each several spirit 31
With such divine surpassing melody
As would be full reward for highest merit;
When from the holiest light—in th' lesser round
I heard a modest voice (such as might be
The voice of Gabriel unto Mary) sound
In answer thus: "Long as the joy shall last 37
That reigns in Paradise, so long shall Love
Around our forms this beauteous raiment cast.
Its brightness varies as the ardour glows,—
The ardour as the vision seen above—
And this,—as God on merit grace bestows.
When we regain our flesh, made pure and bright, 43
Our persons, rendered perfect and complete,
More pleasing will become;—since to the light,
Assigned now unto us by God's free grace,
A greater share will then be given, that meet
We may become to look upon His face.
Wherefore the vision granted us must needs 49
Increase—increase the ardour glowing thence—
Increase the radiance that from it proceeds.
But e'en as burning coal, emitting flame,
That flame in whiteness overcomes, and hence
Preserves its own appearance still the same;
So will the rays which now our forms surround 55
Be vanquished by the flesh in brilliancy—
That flesh now covered under yonder ground:

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35. That of Solomon.

Nor will such ray fatigue us, as too bright;
For all the organs of our frame will be
Formed to sustain whatever gives delight."
The readiness displayed to say, 'Amen'
By either choir, a heartfelt ardour proved
With their dead bodies to be clothed again;
Not for themselves perhaps, but for their sires,
Their mothers, and the kindred whom they loved,
Before they had become eternal fires.
And lo, around us—lucid as the one
Now there—high over us, a light arose,
Like heaven when re-illumined by the sun:
And as at the first lighting up of eve
The sky doth new appearances disclose,
That now seem real, now the sight deceive;
So these new substances arising, seemed
To show themselves, and compass with a zone
The circles twain, whence such bright radiance gleamed.
O genuine sparkle of the Holy Sprite!
How swift it came; and, oh! how clear it shone,
Dazzling my eyes with the excessive light!
But lo, so fair and smiling was the face
Of Beatrice, that I the record leave,
With other themes which memory fails to trace.
Then was the vigour of mine eyes restored;
And, raising them above, I could perceive
That we had now to higher glory soared.
Of my ascent I could not fail to know;
Such was the ruddy smile that star displayed,
Which seemed to witness an unusual glow.
With all the heart, and by that speech the same
In all, to God an holocaust I made
Which such new gift of heavenly grace became.
Nor yet had ceased the fervour of my prayer,
Ere I perceived my sacrifice to heaven
Had been propitious and accepted there:
For to two splendours that appeared in sight
Was such a red and ardent lustre given,

68. The light, already there, is that proceeding from the two circles of spirits before described. These are presently encompassed by a third circle. 88. *i.e.* By the eternal emotions of the mind.

"O God," I cried, "how brilliant is their light!"
E'en as illumed with stars of various size, 97
The milky way is 'twixt the poles arrayed
In whiteness—raising doubts among the wise;
Thus, spangled thickly in Mars' orb profound,
Those beams that venerable sign displayed,
Formed by diameters within a round.
Describe I cannot what I call to mind; 103
For Christ himself was beaming on that cross:
Wherefore no fit example I can find.
But whoso takes his cross, and follows Christ
Excuse will grant, if I am at a loss—
When in that radiance he beholdeth Christ.
From horn to horn, and 'twixt the base and height, 109
Move lights, whence vivid scintillations flow,
Both when they pass, and at the point unite:
E'en so on earth oft atoms do we see,
Twisted or straight, those swift, and others slow,
Some long, some short, of all variety,
Sport in the sunbeam, where is streaked the shade 115
Which, in defence against the changeful sky,
Man by the exertion of his wit hath made.
And as a lyre, attuned throughout its chords
Unto the harp, a pleasing harmony
To one unknowing of the art affords;
So from the radiant lustre there appearing 121
Ran through the Cross a gathering melody,
Which ravished me, although the hymn scarce hearing.
High praises clearly sounded in my ears;
For—"Rise again," I heard, "and victor be,"—
As one not comprehending what he hears.
So much enamoured was I at the sound, 127
That never to this time with such sweet ties
Had ought o'erpowered, and all my senses bound.
Haply my words may overbold appear,
Slighting the joy derived from those fair eyes,
On which I look, and soothe my every care,

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100. The sign of the cross in Mars refers to the holy warfare of Christians. 109. *i.e.* From the four extremities of the cross. 125. These words are taken from a hymn sung by the Church in praise of Christ.

But since each living seal of beauty glows 133
With greater warmth, as we ascend on high;
And since, on these intent, I saw not those,—
Well may I be forgiven, if the while
I blame myself, I hold to verity;
For hence is banished not the holy smile,
But, as we mount, acquires fresh brilliancy. 139

CANTO XV.

ARGUMENT.

In the planet Mars, the poet meets with his ancestor Cacciaguida, who describes the simple manners of the Florentines in olden time.

THAT will benevolent, which ever flows 1
From heart wherein true charity abounds—
E'en as self-love a will malignant shows—
Now stilled the lyre of that melodious band,
And made the chords to cease their holy sounds—
Those cords relaxed or braced by Heaven's right hand.
How shall such spirits to a righteous prayer 7
Ever be deaf—who that they might to me
Audience afford, together silent were?
Well may he ever grieve, who for the love
Of things which cannot last eternally,
Loses this fervent charity above!
As oft along the pure and tranquil sky 13
A sudden fire by night is seen to dart,
Attracting forcibly the heedless eye,
And seems to be a star that changes place,
Save that no star is missing from that part,
And that it glitters but a moment's space;—
So from the horn extending to the right, 19
E'en to the foot of that high cross, there shone

133. *i.e.* All the created things that bear the divine stamp. Dante, intent on the beauty of the higher heavens, to which he was called, ceased to behold the eyes of Beatrice. 138. Translated "holy smile" by comparison with canto xv. 34.

4. "The poet having previously mentioned the song which the blessed were singing in the splendid cross, now relates how they had ceased, by their own voluntary act of kindness, and without entreaty, in order to give him an opportunity of addressing them." Lombardi. 19. The spirit of Cacciaguida, Dante's ancestor, glides down from the cross, and addresses him.

A star from out the constellation bright:
Nor left that gem the line whereon it beamed,
But through the radiant track swift passing on,
Like fire behind pure alabaster seemed.
Such fond delight Anchises' soul displayed
(If our most honoured Muse may be believed)
His son beholding in the Elysian shade.
"O my descendant! O Grace, richly given!
Who, like to thee, hath e'er such share received?
For whom hath opened twice the gate of heaven?"
So spake the light;—whereat I gazed attent,
Then turned my looks unto my Lady's face,
Musing on either side in wonderment:
For such a smile was glowing in her eyes,
That I appeared to reach the depths of grace,
And utmost rapture of my Paradise.
Anon—all joyous both in look and speech—
The spirit from his inmost bosom poured
Things that my understanding failed to reach.
Yet not by choice my reason he outran,
But of necessity;—so highly soared
His thoughts above the aim of mortal man.
And when the bow of his impassioned thought
Had spent its force, so that his speech at last
Down to the level of our minds was brought,
The first thing that my senses understood
Was, "Blessed art Thou, Trinal God, who hast
Displayed such courtesy unto my blood:"
And this he added:—"Know that in the flame,
In which I now, my Son, with thee confer,—
That long delicious thirst, which o'er me came
While reading in the mighty book, which time
Affects not, thou hast sated;—thanks to her
Who imped thy pinions for the flight sublime.
Thou deemest that thy thoughts pass on to me
From Him whence thought proceeds—the Primal One:
As five, or six diverge from unity;
And therefore thou my name dost not demand,

51. *i.e.* The desire which I have felt to see thee, through knowledge of thy arrival, obtained in the "mirror," or face of God. See line 62.
58. Dante wished to inquire who this spirit was, and the reason of his delight; but he knew that his desires were visible

Or why more transport in my look is shown
Than any other of this joyful band.
True this belief of thine; for each one here 61
Looks on that mirror, where the untold thought,
Ere yet conceived, is drawn distinct and clear.
But that the sacred love, which constantly
Urges to watchfulness, and a sweet drought
Brings o'er my sense, may more contented be,—
With joyful voice, and with undaunted brow 67
Declare what wish, and what desire is thine,
Whereto an answer is prepared e'en now."
I turned to Beatrice:—she heard before
I spake to her, and smiled to me a sign,
Which made the wings of hope increase the more.
"Love, and the power to express it," I commenced, 73
"When ye beheld the First Equality,
To each of you were equally dispensed;
Since they exist so equal in the Sun
Whence ye derive your heat and brilliancy,
Likeness beside may be imagined none.
But among mortals, will and sense are things, 79
Which for the cause to you made manifest,
Are far from being trimmed with equal wings:
Wherefore by me, a mortal, may be shown
For the paternal love thou hast expressed
My gratitude but in the heart alone.
Prayer unto thee I make with earnest claim, 85
O living topaz, who this jewel dear
Adornest, to inform me what thy name."
"O thou my branch, know that thy root was I;
And my first joy was to expect thee here:"
Such a beginning made he in reply:
Then added, "He whose name to thine is bound, 91
And who some hundred years and more hath made
His progress through the mountain's lowest round,
Was thy great grandsire, and was son to me:

74. God—so called, since by Him all things, whether easy or difficult, are equally capable of execution. 86. The jewel is the cross, of which Cacciaguida was one of the gems. 88. Father of Alighieri, the great grandsire of whom Dante was proud. 92. *i.e.* Alighieri has been one hundred years in the first circle of Purgatory, where the proud are punished by carrying heavy stones on their backs.

How would it grace thee, if through filial aid
His heavy sufferings were abridged by thee!
Florence, confined within that ancient wall,
Whence still the chimes at noon and evening sound,
Was sober, modest, and at peace with all.
No chain, no crown had she;—no dames that drew
Rich sandals on their feet, and clasped around
The girdle, brighter than themselves to view.
The father, at his daughter's birth, with fears
Was troubled not, lest she should ask a dower
Too ample, or too early for her years.
No houses then were void of families;
And no Sardanapalus yet had power
To introduce unheard of luxuries.
Not yet had Florence in her thirst for fame
Eclipsed the structures of Imperial Rome—
Swift as they rose, so swiftly doomed to shame.
Myself have seen Bellincion Berti pace
The street in leathern belt;—his lady come
Forth from her toilet with unpainted face:—
Have seen, contented in their coats of skin,
The Nerli and the Vecchio; and beheld
Their wives with lightsome heart sit down to spin.
O happy they! each sure to lay the head
In her own tomb; and no one yet compelled
To weep deserted in a lonely bed.
To watch the cradle was the care one chose,
Her child consoling with the self-same word
That hushed her sires and mothers to repose.
Over the distaff one the flax would comb,
And tell her family, that wondering heard,
Stories of Troy, of Fiesole and Rome.
As great a marvel had been deemed, I trow,

96. By thy prayers and good deeds. 97. This description is considered one of the most beautiful in the Divina Commedia. 107. The luxurious king of Assyria here represents any effeminate person. 109 In the original, Rome is termed "Montemalo," now Montemario, and Florence "Uccellatorio,"—both being mountains commanding a view of their respective cities. 112. The representative of the Ravignani, a noble Florentine family. 116. Two of the most opulent families in Florence. 118. Without fear of banishment, so common in the times of Dante, when one dominant party drove out the other. 126. Of Fiesole, the cradle of Florence, see Inf. xv. 62.

A Salterello, or Cianghella then,
As Cincinnatus or Cornelia now.
To such pure life of beauty and repose—
Such faithful citizens—such happy men
The Virgin gave me, when my mother's throes
Forced her with cries to call on Mary's name.
And know, that in your ancient Baptistry,
Christian, and Cacciaguida I became:
Eliseus and Moront my brothers were:
From Val di Pado came my wife; and she
Brought to our stock the surname thou dost bear.
Then followed I the Emperor Conrad, who
The honour of a knight on me conferred,
In guerdon for my faith and service true:
And in his company I went to fight
Against the faithless ones, who, not deterred
By your ill Pastor, still usurp your right.
In battle there did that degraded race
From the fallacious world my soul release,
The love of which so many doth debase:
Thence came I here from martyrdom to peace."

CANTO XVI.

ARGUMENT.

Cacciaguida continues his discourse—gives a history of Dante's progenitors, and of the noble families that flourished at Florence in his time.

O EMPTY name, Nobility of birth!
If here below, where frailty is our lot,
Thou promptest man to overrate thy worth,
I ne'er shall be surprised; since I in heaven—
There where the appetite offendeth not—
To boast of my nobility was given.
Thou art indeed a robe soon cut away,

---

128. Persons of abandoned character; as rare then as persons of an opposite character in Dante's time. 132. It was then the custom to call on the Virgin amid the pains of childbirth, see Purg. xx. 19. 143. *i.e.* The Mahometans, who then governed the Holy Land.

1. "Behold, how many are deceived, who being born of illustrious ancestors, and descended from excellent parents, deem themselves noble, when they have no nobility in them." Dante, Convito, Trat. iv. 20. 6. Dante confesses, as in Purg. xiii. 137, that pride was his besetting sin.

(Time ever coming round thee with his shears)
If pieces be not added day by day.
With "You," a phrase by Rome first countenanced—
Though discontinued in these latter years—
Began the speech I now again advanced:
And Beatrice, who stood some distance thence, 13
Smiling appeared, like her who coughed, 'tis said,
What time Ginevra wrought her first offence.
I thus my speech began:—"You are my Sire—
You bid me speak—You bid me raise my head,
And an unwonted confidence inspire.
Rivers of joy so numerous fill my mind 19
That 'tis a feast to hold such rich contents,
Nor burst, o'erfraught with treasures unconfined.
Tell me, loved stock, whence I derive my birth,
Who were your ancestors?—and what events,
Marked in your youthful prime the years on earth?
Tell of the fold protected by St. John, 25
What was its size; and who the people were
That chief pre-eminence within it won?"
As coal bursts forth, enlivened into flame,
When breathes the wind; e'en so that lustre fair
More fervent at my blandishment became;
And brighter as it grew before mine eyes, 31
So with a voice more soft and sweet to hear,
(Not in the tongue now used—of modern guise)
It answered: "From the day when 'Hail' was said,
Unto the day my sainted mother dear
Me, her loved burden, to the light displayed,
Five hundred times and fifty-three this fire 37
To Leo had returned, that for its dim
And failing orb fresh light it might acquire.
My ancestors and I dwelt in that place,
First of the last sixth part attained by him

10. Discovering his ancestor, Dante changes his language from "Tu" to "Voi." 25. The city of Florence—which had for its protector John the Baptist. See Inf. xiii. 146. 37. According to Lombardi's calculation,—taking 687 days to a revolution of the planet Mars, from the day of the Annunciation to Cacciaguida's birth about 1090 years had elapsed. 40. Florence was anciently divided into six districts; Cacciaguida dwelt in that last reached by the competitors in the race at the feast of St. John the Baptist.

Who strives for mastery in your annual race.
Thus much of my Forefathers ;—who they were, 43
Whence they came here, and from what race of men,
'Tis fitter to be silent, than declare.
Those capable of bearing arms, between
Mars' statue and the Baptist's church, were then
A fifth of the inhabitants now seen:
But in their veins the blood unmingled ran 49
(No Campi, no Certaldo, no Figghine)
Down to the very lowest artizan.
O how much better had it been for you
Still to have called them neighbours, and confine
On Trespian and Galluzzo, than to view
Them in your walls, and bear the fume that now 55
Doth from Aguglio's noisome peasant flow;
While he of Signa, bartering, knits his brow!
And if the tribe, who more than any other
Malignant are, had not 'gainst Cæsar so
Inveterate been, but kind as is a mother,
He who now lives in Florence, and drives there 61
His trade, had been turned back to Semifonti,
Where erst his Grandsire begged his daily fare:
The Counts had Montemurlo still retained;
In Valdigrieve had lived the Buondelmonti;
The Cerchi in Acone had remained.
To mixture of the blood may be imputed 67
The ills which on the city have been poured;
As hurt the body various meats ill suited.
The blind bull falls more quickly to the ground
Than a blind lamb; and oft the single sword
Deals than the five a more destructive wound.
If Luni you regard, or Urbisaglia, 73
How they are gone; and how now suffer change
Chiusi in like guise and Sinigaglia—

58. See Purg. vi. 91, xvi. 100. "The meaning is: If the Church, of which the Pope is head, &c."—Landino. "He calls 'la gente della chiesa,' such as Popes and Cardinals, most degenerate, for reasons all are acquainted with."—Vellutello. 60. The Church is said to have acted with the hostility of a step-mother to the Emperors, whom she should have treated with the love of a mother. 61. The flocking of the people from the country to the city was the effect of the wars between the Pope and the Emperors, which Dante particularly laments here.

To hear how noble families decay
  Will not appear a novel thing or strange,
  Since states and kingdoms also pass away.
Like to yourselves, your works are doomed to die; 79
  Although some structure now its end conceals,
  Enduring long, while lives are hurried by.
And as the moon, whose orb is never still,
  Now veils your spreading shores and now reveals.—
  So Fortune doth in Florence work her will:
Wherefore no marvel deem what I relate 85
  Of many a proud and lofty Florentine,
  Whose fame of olden time is out of date.
I've seen the Ughi, seen the Greci crowned
  With glory, who now wither in decline,—
  The Ormanni, Albericchi too renowned.
Illustrious for their valour and their birth 91
  The Ardinghi, and Bostichi have I seen,
  And Soldanieri, once deemed men of worth.
Over the gate, where lately deeds so dark
  And villanous have perpetrated been,
  That they will soon prove fatal to our bark,
The Ravignani used to dwell; whence came 97
  Count Guido, and the mighty ones beside
  Who from the great Bellincion take their name.
The arts of rule knew he of Pressa old;
  And Galigaio could erewhile with pride
  Display the pommel and the hilt of gold.
The column of the Pigli yet was great; 103
  The Giuochi and Sacchetti bore them high;
  And the Sifanti still upheld their state.
Flourished the ancient stock of the Calfucci;
  And to their curule chairs full honourably
  Were drawn the Sizii and the Arrigucci.
O how exalted have I seen of old 109
  Those whom their pride hath marr'd! what glory that
  Showered down on Florence by the balls of gold!
Such were the sires of those whom now we see,
  Where'er your Church is vacant, growing fat

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94. *i. e.* Over the gate of St. Peter. 111. *i. e.* The Lamberti,—the bearings of whose arms were golden balls. 112. *i. e.* Who whenever a vacancy occurs in the Church, reap a rich harvest, and grow fat sitting in conclave till they agree upon a nomination.

By long remaining in consistory.
The domineering tribe, which fiercely plies
The fugitive, but unto him who shows
Or tooth, or purse, hath lamb-like qualities,
Was looking up; but so plebeian still,
That Ubertin Donato's anger rose
At their alliance.—E'en now from the hill
Of Fæsulæ had Caponsac descended
To trade;—and Giuda as a citizen,
And Infangato also was commended.
A truth I tell that scarce will be believed:—
The gate into the lesser circle then
From Pera's family its name received.
All that bear ensigns of that Baron great,
Whose title and whose worth is testified,
Oft as returns St. Thomas' annual fete,
Knighthood and privilege from him obtained;
Though one now lists upon the people's side,
Whose fringe of gold erewhile from him was gained.
The Gualterolti still their fame possessed,
And Importuni;—had no neighbours new
Been added, Borgo still had been at rest.
The family which all your misery wrought
Through the just ire ye so severely rue,
And to an end your glad existence brought,
Was honoured,—and its friends. How woefully,
O Buondelmonti, didst thou fix our doom,
When from thy pledge of marriage thou didst flee!
Many, who now are sad, would joyous be,
If God, when to our city thou didst come,
To Ema's waters had abandoned thee.
But when her days of peace were at an end,
'Twas Florence' doom she should propitiate
The broken bust that doth the bridge defend.

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115. The Adimari. 125. *i.e.* The gate into the walls, before the circle was enlarged. 127. Florentine families had been permitted by Count Ugo of Luxembourg, "the great Baron," Lieutenant of the Emperor Otho III., to bear his arms, and to obtain other privileges of nobility. Ugo died on St. Thomas' day; and the monks used to keep the anniversary. 131. Giano della Bella. 35. A division of the city. 136. The Amidei. 140. See note to Inf. xxviii. 107 144. *i.e.* It had been well if he had been drowned in the river Ema, on his way to Florence. 147. The statue of Mars, on the Ponte Vecchio

With these and others Florence have I known
  In such a tranquil and contented state,
  No cause for lamentation could be shown.
With these for her defenders, have I seen
  Her people just and glorious, so that ne'er
  Stained through division had her lily been
With vermeil, or reversed upon the spear."

CANTO XVII.

ARGUMENT.

Cacciaguida foretels Dante's banishment, and the calamities he is about to suffer from his ungrateful countrymen. He bids him not shrink from declaring the truth revealed in his vision, however bitter it may be.

As he who came to Clymene to inquire
  If true the tale reported to his shame,
  (Phaeton—whose rashness hardens many a sire)
E'en such was I, and such the hue I wore;
  Which Beatrice and that most holy flame
  Perceived, who changed his place for me before.
"Let then thy strong desire," my Lady said,
  "Shine freely forth, and thus, distinctly shown,
  The internal stamp be outwardly displayed.
Not that our knowledge will increase thereby,
  But to accustom thee thy thirst to own,
  That others may thy longings satisfy."
"Oh my loved stem, exalted to such height
  That plainly as we mortals see but one
  Obtuse in a triangle,—so thy sight
Things future contemplates with vision clear,
  Viewing that Centre unto whom are known
  Future and past, as though they present were.

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was broken down when Buondelmonti was slain. 148. *i.e.* Under the auspices of the old families above mentioned. 153. After the civil war, the Guelfs changed the white lily for a yellow. 154. Carried upside down by a conqueror.

1. Phaëton, in great anxiety, inquired of his mother Clymene if he were indeed the son of Apollo. With equal anxiety Dante, wishing to question his ancestor Cacciaguida "that most holy flame," as to his future life, was afraid to do so—remembering the impending evils alluded to by Farinata, Inf. x. 81 and 127. 13. Dante addresses Cacciaguida, as Beatrice directs him.

While Virgil was my escort, as we sped
Up to the mount which makes the spirits pure,
And down to the dark regions of the dead,
My coming life to me was shadowed out
In words, that, though I feel well squared to endure
The shafts of fortune, fill my mind with doubt:
Wherefore I fain would know the misery
That cruel Fortune hath for me in store,
Since gentler comes the arrow we foresee."
Thus, at my Lady's bidding, I addressed
The Light which had conversed with me before,
And all the longing of my soul confessed.
Nor by responses, such as led astray
The world with smooth deceptions, ere was slain
The Lamb of God, that taketh sins away,
But in clear words and simple Latin style,
That love paternal answered me again,
Piercing his shroud of splendour with a smile.
"Contingency, which doth possess no place
Beyond your globe, nor o'er its bound extend,
Is wholly pictured in the Eternal face:
(Not that necessity drives things by force,
Unless the eye which sees a ship descend
A rapid stream, be said to urge its course),
Whence, as soft harmony comes o'er the ear
From sweet-toned organ, so comes o'er my sight
The time which unto thee approacheth near.
As through a treacherous step-dame's cruel art
Hippolitus from Athens took his flight,
So thou art doomed from Florence to depart.
This aim, this object is already sought;
And he who plans it, soon his power shall prove,
E'en there where Christ is daily sold and bought.

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20. *i.e.* To Purgatory, see viii. 137. 26. Thus in the Inferno, (xv. 93) Dante declared to Brunetto: "Let Fortune do her worst, prepared am I." 43. *i.e.* So from the face of God is reflected upon my sight your future destiny. 50. *i.e.* "The Pope has already laid a plot against you at Rome, where simony is daily practised." See Inf. xix. 9. "He points to the treaty on foot at Rome with Boniface VIII. to induce Charles Lackland, brother to the king of France, to come to Florence under pretence of reforming it; but, in truth, to drive out the Bianchi, to which party Dante belonged; as was effected in January, 1302."—Lombardi.

On the injured side shall clamour fix the blame,
As it is wont; but Vengeance from above
Shall signal witness of the truth proclaim.
Thou shalt be torn from every earthly thing
Beloved most dearly;—shot from Exiles' bow,
This arrow foremost to thy heart shall spring.
Thou shalt by trial know what bitter fare
Is others' bread;—how hard the path to go
Upward and downward by another's stair.
But that which shall thy misery complete,
Shall be the foul and senseless company
Which in this valley thou art doomed to meet;
For most ungrateful, loathsome, impious—all
Shall set themselves to work thy misery:
But thou shalt witness soon their destined fall.
Their brutish nature, by their actions known,
Shall prove how honourable 'tis to thee
To have formed a party of thyself alone.
Thy first retreat—first refuge from despair,
Shall be the mighty Lombard's courtesy,
Whose arms the Eagle on a ladder bear.
His looks on thee so kindly shall be cast,
That asking and conceding shall change place;
And that, wont first to be, 'twixt you be last.
With him shall one be found, who, at his birth,
Was by this ardent star so fraught with grace,
His deeds of valour shall display his worth.
Not yet his virtue by the world is known;
So tender is his age; for scarce nine years
Around him have these rolling circles flown:
But ere the Gascon's artifice deceive
Great Henry, he, all sordid hopes and fears

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62. "With these vile companions of his exile, Dante in vain attempted a forcible entrance into Florence. After this miscarriage, Dante quitted the confederacy—disgusted by the bickerings, jealousies, and bad faith, of the heterogeneous and unmanageable multitude, which common calamities had drawn together, but could not cement by common interests."—Life of Dante, Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia. 63. The "valley" means Italy in its degraded state. See Inferno, i. 14. 71. Bartolomeo della Scala, Lord of Verona. 76. Henry of Luxemburg, (line 83.) 82. Pope Clement, the Gascon, after making Henry Emperor, secretly assisted his foes. See note to Inf. xix. 83; and note to Par. xxx. 136.

Despising, shall a glorious name achieve
His deeds magnificent shall still proclaim 85
His praise so loudly, that his very foes
Shall be compelled to celebrate his fame.
Look thou to his beneficence; for he
Of fortunes in such manner shall dispose,
Rich shall be poor, and poor exalted be.
Stamp in thy mind these words of prophecy, 91
But be they not divulged." Then things he told,
Incredible, though witnessed by the eye;
And added: "This my comment doth reveal
The evils whispered of:—those snares behold,
Which but a few revolving years conceal.
Yet for your neighbours let no jealousy 97
Be felt; for longer shall your life be spared
Than to see punished their fell perfidy."
When, having ceased to speak, that holy one
Made me perceive that he was well prepared
To weave the woof I had myself begun—
Doubting, like one who fain would counsel hear 103
From some tried friend on whom he may repose,
Sound in his judgment, and of soul sincere.
"Sire," I began, "I mark how time for me
Prepares a blow that heaviest falls on those
Who look for it with most despondency:
Therefore with foresight let me arm my breast, 109
That if I lose the place I cherish most,
The boldness of my verse lose not the rest.
Down in the world of endless misery,
And on the mountain, from whose beauteous coast
The eyes of Beatrice exalted me;—
And as through heaven I passed from sphere to sphere, 115
That did I learn, which, were I to disclose,
To many would of bitter taste appear.
But if the truth I timidly unfold,
I fear to die in the esteem of those
To whom the present time will soon be old."
The Light so dear to me, whence smiles were flowing, 121

95. Referring to hints thrown out of impending calamities.

110. *i.e.* "Foreseeing my exile from Florence, the place of my birth, I must take care, lest, indulging a spirit of satire, I exclude myself from other places also."

DANTE DISCOURSING WITH CACCIAGUIDA



Assumed at first a garb of livelier flame,
Like golden mirror in the sunbeam glowing;
Then answered me: "The conscience that is dyed
Or with its own, or with another's shame,
May not the sharpness of your words abide:
Nevertheless, each false disguise removed, 127
Be all the vision fully manifested;
And let him wince who feels himself reproved:
For if thy words be deemed a harsh repast,
When tasted first, yet still, when well digested,
A wholesome food shall they afford at last.
This thy reproof shall like the wind be found, 133
Which chiefly doth the loftiest heights assail:
And hence a greater glory shall redound.
Wherefore no spirits here to thee are shown,
Or in the mount, or in the dolorous vale,
Save those whose lofty names to fame are known.
For he who hears thee, will not be inclined 139
To give full credence, and to rest secure,
If the example brought before his mind
Be based on root ignoble or obscure."

CANTO XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

Many distinguished warriors and Crusaders are seen in the planet Mars. Dante thence ascends to Jupiter, the sixth heaven, in which the spirits of those who have been eminent upon earth for the administration of Justice are disposed in the form of an Eagle.

Now silently that happy soul pursued 1
His joyous musings—I too, thoughtfully
Tempered the pleasant with the bitter food;
When She, who led me on my heavenward flight,
Said: "Muse on other things; and know that I
Am near to Him, who doth each wrong requite."
I turned me at my Comforter's loved strain; 7
But to describe the affection that I viewed
Within her holy eyes I strive in vain;—
Not merely wanting trust in mine own speech,

1. Cacciaguida.—Dante was also meditating on the predictions made to himself in the last canto.

But, to retrace such feeling, not endued
With mental power, unless Another teach.
But this at least I treasure in my mind, 13
That, gazing upon her in that blest place,
All other wishes wholly were resigned;
Till the Eternal Pleasure, beaming bright
On Beatrice, reflected from her face,
Thrilled me again with exquisite delight.
Then with a smile that all my soul subdued, 19
"Turn thee, and list," she said; "for Paradise
May elsewhere than within these eyes be viewed."
And as sometimes in this our mortal state
We see affection pictured in the eyes,
Of power the soul entire to captivate:—
So, in the effulgence of that holy flame 25
To which I turned, an ardent wish I saw
A further intercourse with me to claim.
"In this fifth tier," commenced he, "of the tree,
Which vital strength doth from the Summit draw,
And beareth fruit and leaves eternally,—
Are blessed spirits, who, ere to heaven they came, 31
Obtained such high distinction in their day,
Each were a theme to exalt a poet's fame.
Wherefore observe the cross in either horn;
And he whom I shall name will there display
The form of lightning 'thwart heaven's concave borne."
Joshua he named; and I beheld a light 37
Swift drawn along the cross; nor did the sound
Reach mine ear swifter than the flame my sight.
Another bright effulgence I beheld
At name of Maccabee whirl round and round;
Gladness the lash which that bright top impelled.
Then in like manner was my eyesight bent 43
Orlando to behold, and Charlemagne,
As on his bird the falconer looks intent.
There William I beheld, and Rinoard;
And the Duke Godfrey was in semblance plain

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21. On this warning Dante again turns his attention to Cacciaguida. 28. Mars is the fifth step, or branch of the tree, *i.e.* of the cross mentioned before (xiv. 101,) composed of the spirits of the blessed, and whose summit is Christ. 44. See Inf. xxxi. 18, and note. 46. Leaders under Charlemagne. 47. Godfrey of Bouillon.

Seen on that cross, and Robert hight Guiscard.
The soul who spoke to me, now—(mixt among 49
The other lights and singers manifold)
Showed how in heaven he knew to pour the song.
I turned me then unto the dexter side,
In Beatrice my duty to behold,
Or by her words or gesture signified;
And saw the rays beam from her so serene, 55
So joyous—she surpassed herself in beauty—
Transcending all that I before had seen.
And as from consciousness of joy and peace,
The man who strives in active course of duty
Feels day by day his holiness increase;
So I perceived the circle of my flight, 61
Together with the heaven, become enlarged,
Seeing that Miracle increase in light.
And rapid as the change in Maiden's face,
What time the crimson hue wherewith 'twas charged,
To native paleness doth again give place;
Such change that tempered planet made appear 67
In her, by reason of its silvery sheen;—
The sixth which had received me in its sphere.
And in that gladsome torch of Jove I saw
The sparks of love, which flowing there were seen,
Letters like those we use distinctly draw.
And as from river side birds soar away, 73
Greeting the pastures that before them lie,
Now in a round, and now a long array;
So these blest lights did holy joy impel
To change their form and figures as they fly,
Now like the letter D—now I—now L.
They move accordant to their holy strain, 79
Till one of these same letters they have wrought,
Then pause, and silent for awhile remain.
O heavenly Muse, that dost to glory give

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48. See note Inf. xxviii. 14. 49. Cacciaguida. 63. Beatrice.—She being now exalted from Mars to Jupiter, loses the ruddy hue of the former planet, and assumes the more tempered aspect of the latter. 71. The "sparks of love" are blessed spirits inflamed with charity. 78. The three initial letters of "Diligite justitiam, qui judicatis terram." "Love righteousness, ye that are judges of the earth." Wisdom i. 1. (See line 91.)

Those favoured sons, who, by thy lessons taught,
Make states and cities in thy numbers live—
Impart thy light, that I may now rehearse
The forms in which these gems mine eyesight smote;
And may thy power appear in this brief verse!
Vowels and consonants then met mine eye,
Thirty and five; nor did I fail to note
The order in the which they seemed to lie.
"Diligite justitiam," first passed
Before me, in effulgent words portrayed;
"Qui judicatis terram," were the last.
Now in the M of "terram" were they so
Arranged, that like to silver when inlaid
With gold, did Jupiter's appearance show:
And towards that letter's summit, from above
Descended other lights, and rested there,
Singing His praise who draws them by His love.
Then as we see from shaken firebrands rise
Innumerable sparkles in the air,
Whence omens are inferred by the unwise;
So, as it seemed, some thousand lights arose,
These mounting more, these less, e'en at the beck
Of that bright Sun from whom their glory flows.
And when each one, in its own station placed,
Had settled,—I an Eagle's head and neck
Saw in that silvery flame distinctly traced.
(No guiding hand the Painter here possesses—
Himself the guide: each orb his power proclaims,
And His informing mind throughout confesses)!
The other souls, that late by gladness stirred
Cast their white crowns of lilies 'mid the M's,
With easy flight pursued the imperial Bird,
Sweet star! how do thy many jewels bright
Show that the justice which we boast on earth

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94. The spirits, settling upon the M, compose the figure of the Eagle, which is dedicated to Jove. 102. *i.e.* Omens of future riches in proportion to the number of sparks. 107. The Eagle represents the imperial government, and is the type of that universal monarchy or "Justizia" which Dante wished to establish. Its supporters are the gems of the "imperial bird." 109. *i.e.* God Himself moves the spirits to this configuration. 113. The "M's" are the final letters of "Justitiam" and "terram." 115. Jupiter,—supposed to be the source of Justice on earth.

Springs from the heaven illumined with thy light!
Wherefore to that omniscient Mind I pray,
Who gives your motion and your virtue birth,
To mark whence comes the smoke that dims your ray.
So that His anger may be shown once more 121
'Gainst them who buy and sell within the fane
Built up by miracles and martyrs' gore.
Ye hosts of heaven, whose armies I survey,
Make prayer for those who yet on earth remain,
All through an ill-example gone astray!
Their warfare men were wont with sword to ply; 127
But now 'tis waged by holding back that bread
The pitying Father doth to none deny.
And thou, who writest but to blot again,
Bethink thee—Paul and Peter are not dead,
Though for the vineyard, that thou spoilest, slain.
Well mayest thou exclaim: "For him who erst 133
Chose in deserted wilds to live alone,
(His head a dancer's prize) so much I thirst,
The Fisherman and Paul are both unknown."

CANTO XIX.

ARGUMENT.

The Eagle replies to Dante's inquiry whether any who are not Christians can be saved.

Before my sight now shone with wings outspread 1
The beauteous Image, which, new joy imparting,
O'er the collected souls its gladness shed,

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118. This prayer is thus paraphrased by Landino: "And I pray the divine Mind to look down upon this malignity—that as in his life-time Christ was incensed with those who bought and sold in the temple, and drove them out, so now he would show his wrath against the pastors and prelates who practise simony, and sell sacred things in the Church of God." 126. By the "example" of the Pope. See Purg. xvi. 103. 128. *i.e.* "He wages war by excommunication, and denial of the sacramental bread, which God himself denies not to those who truly repent." 130. *i.e.* "And thou who sendest forth thy censures, not for the purpose of chastising offenders, but to be paid for revoking them, remember," &c. —Landino. This exclamation is addressed either to Pope Boniface, or to Clement V., then living. Of these two Popes, see notes, Inf. xix. 77 and 82. 136. *i.e.* The Pope thirsts more for John the Baptist (*i.e.* the floren, or coin of Florence, stamped with his head) than for either St. Peter or St. Paul.

Like to a little ruby each in guise—
Whereon the sun so strong a ray was darting,
Its lustre was refracted on mine eyes.
And that which now I am assigned to write, 7
Voice never told before, or pen expressed,
Nor e'er was caught by fancy's highest flight:
For I beheld and heard the Eagle speak;
Though in the singular he us addressed,
The plural was intended by the beak.
"For being just and pious," he began, 13
"To this high state of glory am I raised,
Surpassing all that is conceived by man:
And such remembrance have I left on earth,
That even by the impious it is praised,
Though slow they be to emulate my worth."
As several coals emit a single heat,— 19
From that imperial image even so
Did many a voice in full accordance meet.
I then began: "O ye delicious flowers
Of the eternal Joy, that ever blow,
Mingling in one your odoriferous showers,—
Speak, and the cravings of my soul relieve, 25
So long a time by hunger tried severely;
Since earthly food may no contentment give.
Well know I, if in any realm of heaven
Supernal Justice is reflected clearly,
In your's no dim or sparing view is given.
Ye know how ardent is my wish to hear; 31
Ye know the doubt that to my bosom clings,
And has so long been found an inmate there."
Lo, as a falcon, from the hood released,
Uplifts his head, and joyous flaps his wings,
His beauty and his eagerness increased;—
Such zeal and joy did that blest Image show, 37
Chanting forth praises to the Word Divine,
Which only those in Paradise can know:—
Then utter: "He his compasses who placed

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12. *i.e.* The voice of many spirits united in one sound. 13. The Eagle is the personification of Justice, as the standard of imperial Rome. 32. His doubt, which is reflected in the mirror of God, is this—whether persons can be saved who never heard of Christ. 37. To remove Dante's doubts.

At the world's limit, and within the line
Drew beauties, dimly or distinctly traced—
Could not upon the universe so write 43
The impress of his power, but that His Word
Must still be left in distance infinite:
And hence 'tis evident, that he in heaven
Created loftiest his fate incurred
Because he would not wait till light was given.
And hence are all inferior creatures shown 49
Scant vessels of that Goodness unconfined
Which nought can measure save Itself alone.
Therefore our intellect—a feeble beam,
Struck from the light of the Eternal Mind,
With which all things throughout creation teem,—
Must by its nature be incapable, 55
Save in a low and most remote degree,
Of viewing its exalted principle.
Wherefore the heavenly Justice can no more
By mortal ken be fathomed, than the sea:—
For though the eye of one upon the shore
May pierce its shallows,—waves unfathomed bound 61
His further sight, yet under them is laid
A bottom, viewless through the deep profound.
Light is there none, save from the pure Serene,
Which never is disturbed; all else is shade,
Or poison, rankling in the flesh unseen.
Now on your view the dark retreat doth break, 67
Wherein the living Justice was concealed,
Of which such frequent question thou didst make—
Saying: 'By Indus' stream a man is bred,
Where no one hath a dying Christ revealed,
Or written of him, or his suffering read;
His wishes all, as far as human sense 73
Is able to discover, blameless are,
And all his actions too, without offence;
Yet unbaptized, and heathen, he must die:
Where is this Justice that condemns him?—where,
Though he believe not, doth his sinning lie?'
Now who art thou who would'st assume the place 79

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43. *i.e.* Creation is far inferior to the Creator. 47. Lucifer. 64. *i.e.* From God.

Of Judge; and, with such finite powers, would'st scan
His counsels who alone pervadeth space?
To him indeed who thus would subtilize,
Were Scripture not of greater weight than man,
Matter for endless doubt might well arise.
O earthly animals! O gross of mind! 85
The primal Will, innately good, hath never
Swerved, or from its own perfect Self declined.
Justice in likeness unto It consists:
No good that is created warps it ever;
And by its beam alone that good exists."
As the stork lifts herself the nest above, 91
When she hath satisfied her tender brood;
And they regard her with a look of love;
So moved its wings that blessed Image, swayed
By many thoughts, and grateful for such food;
I too, with look upraised, my thanks conveyed.
Turning around it sang: "As little clear 97
As are to thee these mystic notes of mine;
So, Heaven's high counsels dark to man appear."
When silence o'er those burning splendours came
Of the Holy Spirit, still within the sign
Which awed the world beneath the Roman name,
It recommenced—"In this high realm abide 103
None who of old did not in Christ believe,
Before or after he was crucified.
But oh! what multitudes—'Christ, Christ,' exclaim,
Who in the judgment shall have cause to grieve
Far more than those who never knew His name.
Shame on such Christians shall the Ethiop cry, 109
When the two Colleges shall part—the one
To endless wealth, the one to poverty.
What shall the Persians to your kings exclaim,
When open they shall see the volume thrown,
And view the record of their blasted fame?
There 'mid the other deeds by Albert wrought 115
Shall soon by the unerring pen be traced

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106. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven," &c. Matt. vii. 21. 110. The sheep and the goats. (Matt. xxv. 32.) In the Inferno a particular compartment is termed "the College of Hypocrisy." (xxiii. 92.) 113. An allusion to Rev. xx. 12. 115. See Purg. vi. 96.

An act with misery to Bohemia fraught.
There shall be seen the woe that he shall pour
Along the Seine, by uttering coin debased,—
He who shall meet destruction from a boar.
There shall be seen the domineering pride
Which Scot and English equally befools,
Breaking the bounds in which they should abide:
There seen the effeminacy that o'er Spain
And likewise over the Bohemian rules,
Who virtue ne'er hath gained or wished to gain:
There seen the cripple of Jerusalem,
Whose good deeds by a unit may be told,
The opposite denoted by an M:
There seen his lust of gold and cowardice,
Who guards the isle of fire, in which of old
Anchises closed his mortal destinies.
Told be his story in a fragment;—so
To designate how trivial is his worth,
And in small space much degradation show.
There shall the evil actions be displayed
Of the Uncle and the Brother, who such birth,
And two such crowns have in dishonour laid.
And he of Portugal, and Norway too,
And he of Rascia shall be there confest,
Who well the sight of Venice' coin may rue.
Blest Hungary, if thou couldest set thee free
From future injuries! Navarre too blest,
Couldest thou but arm the mount that circles thee!
Presaging this, e'en now the cries we hear,

118. Philip the fair.—Having been defeated by the Flemings at the battle of Coutrai, in 1302, he paid his army in spurious coin. He died from the wound of a wild boar in 1314. 121. Alluding to the war between Edward I. of England, and John Baliol. 124. Alphonso, King of Spain, and Winceslaus, King of Bohemia, are referred to. See Purg. vii. 101. 127. Charles II. King of Jerusalem and Apulia. See Purg. vii. 124. 131. Frederick of Sicily. See Purg. vii. 119. 137. James, King of Majorca and Minorca, and James II. King of Arragon. 140. Ladislaus, guilty, it seems, of forgery. 142. The throne of Hungary was at this time disputed. 143. Navarre was subject to France, but soon after had a king of its own—and "armed the mount," *i.e.* defended the Pyrenees. 145. *i.e.* "Presaging this defence and delivery from the French yoke, Famagosta and Nicosia are now incensed against their King, who is on a par with the Kings described above."

Whence Famagosta and Nicosia rings
Against the raging beast, who will not bear
To separate himself from other Kings."

CANTO XX.

ARGUMENT.

The Eagle speaks. Seated in the pupil of its eye is seen David, surrounded by Hezekiah, Constantine, William II. of Sicily, Trajan, Ripheus. By these instances Dante shows that the Heathen are not precluded from salvation.

WHEN he, who with his universal ray 1
The world illumines, quits our hemisphere,
And from each quarter daylight wears away;
The heaven, late kindled by his beam alone,
Sudden its lost effulgence doth repair
By many lights, illumined but by one.
Such was the scene presented; when the beak 7
Of that blest sign imperial, and its throngs
Of various leaders, now had ceased to speak:
For all those living souls, in light arrayed,
And more transcendent now, began their songs,—
Songs that from memory too swiftly fade.
Sweet Love, who deckest thyself with smiles! how glowed
Thy rays with fervour in those sparks divine, 14
Which unto holy thoughts their rapture owed!
Soon as the luminous and precious stones
With which engemmed I saw the sixth star shine,
Had put to silence the angelic tones,
Methought I heard a stream, whose limpid course 19
From rock to rock its murmuring waters rolled,
Showing the abundant richness of its source.
And as along the cithern's neck, the sound
Is tuned and tempered; or the wind, controlled
Through pastoral reed, breathes grateful notes around;
So, no delay allowed to interpose, 25
Up through the neck, as though it hollow were,
A murmur from the imperial Bird arose:

7. *i.e.* As at sunset the stars appear, shining by a borrowed light; so, when the imperial eagle had ceased to speak, the various splendours of which it is composed, showed themselves, and broke forth into songs.

Then utterance followed; and the words that fell
  Forth from the beak, articulate and clear,
  My heart foreboded, and retains full well.
"Behold that part of me which dares the day
  In mortal eagles," he began; "and give
  All the attention that thy mind can pay:
For, of the flames by which my form is dight,
  Those whence mine eye its sparkles doth derive
  Surpass the others in excess of light.
This in the midst, like pupil of the eye,
  Was he who bore the ark from town to town,
  And sang in notes of heaven-taught psalmody.
Now he perceives the merit of his strains
  And love of his Inspirer, by the crown
  Which he in guerdon of his song obtains.
Of the five who round mine eyelid form a zone,
  The one, whom nearest to my beak you see,
  Consoled the widow for her murdered son.
Now knows he by experience of this
  Sweet life, and of the opposite, how he
  Who walks not after Christ falls short of bliss.
He who comes next in the circumference,
  And forms the upper arch, his death delayed
  By tears unfeigned, and real penitence:
Now knows he that God's Justice changeth not,
  Though, at the prayer of piety, be stayed
  The hand that for to-day had fixed the lot.
The next you view (his good intent defeated)
  A Greek became with me and with the laws,
  That in his room the Pastor might be seated.
Now knoweth he that the ill consequence
  Of his good deed no harm upon him draws,
  Although the world hath been perverted thence.
He, lower in the arch, was William, who
  With many a tear is wished for by that land
  Which doth the living Charles and Frederick rue:
Now knows he how in heaven a righteous king
  Is loved; and this the more to understand,

45. See Purg. x. 77. 50. Hezekiah. 56. Constantine. 61. William II. of Sicily—a just Prince, who loved his subjects,—is contrasted with Charles II. and Frederick of Arragon.

The brightness of his face a proof may bring.
Who, in the world below to error given, 67
Would think the Trojan Ripheus e'er could be
Fifth 'mid the holy splendours of this heaven?
Full well discerns he now the heavenly Grace,
Which mortals, blindly groping, cannot see,
Though its profundity he cannot trace."
E'en as the lark high soaring pours its throat 73
Awhile, then rests in silence, as though still
Dwelling enamoured of its last sweet note;
Such was the semblance of that Image blest,
Stamped by the Eternal Pleasure, at whose will
Are all things with their proper form imprest.
And though my wish was to be seen as plain 79
As colour through the glass on which 'tis laid,
I could not patiently my lips restrain;
But, "who are these?" with eagerness inquired;
Whereat the imperial Bird its joy betrayed,
In garb of greater brilliancy attired.
Then nearer, and with eye that glowed intense, 85
To me the blessed Eagle made reply,
Lest admiration keep me in suspense:
"I plainly see, thou hast these things believed,
Because I told thee; but concealed they lie—
Not understood by thee, although received.
Thou art like one who apprehendeth well 91
A thing by name, but cannot see the why,
Unless another doth the reason tell.
Heaven's kingdom suffereth violence—by love
And lively hope assailed—whose ardency
Hath power the will of the Most High to move:
Not by the mode that man his fellow sways, 97
But because God is willing to be swayed,
And rules but by the kindness he displays.
The first and fifth light of the arch may well

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68. "Cadit et Ripheus, justissimus unus Qui fuit in Teucris, et servantissimus æqui."—*Æn.* ii. 426. 79. To know whether any but Christians can be saved. 82. *i.e.* "How is it that heathen are placed in the eye of the eagle, among those who have believed in Christ?" 94. "And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence; and the violent take it by force."—Matt. xi. 12. 100. Trajan and Ripheus.

Wonder excite, that with such gems arrayed
Should be the region where the Angels dwell.
They left their bodies, not as you presume, 103
Gentiles, but Christians, firm in faith—the one
Before, the other after Jesus' doom.
For know, the one his flesh and bone regained
From hell, where saving penitence is none;
And this reward of lively hope obtained,—
Of lively hope,—which wholly placed its strength 109
In prayers to God that life he would restore,—
Endued with power to move His will at length.
The glorious soul whose name I have disclosed
(Returning for short space to life once more)
In the All-wise his confidence reposed;
And kindled into such a flame of love, 115
Through faith, that at his second death was he
Deemed worthy of this joyous seat above.
The other, through the assistance of that Grace
Which flows from source of such profundity,
That mortal eye could ne'er that fountain trace,
On Justice all his earthly love bestowed; 121
Whence God, of his own mercy infinite
To him a sight of our Redemption showed.
Believing in its truth, thenceforth he scorned
To persevere in filth of Pagan rite;
And of their sin the crooked nations warned.
A thousand years ere baptism was ordained, 127
For him were sponsors those three Ladies, who
The car's right wheel for their high station gained.
Predestination! oh how distant lies
Thy root from those who do not wholly view
The Primal Cause unfolded to their eyes!
And you, ye mortals, be your judgments slow; 133
For we, by whom the Godhead is descried,
Not yet the number of the elect do know:
And sweet it is in ignorance to be,

110. Trajan is said to have been released from death by the prayers of St. Gregory. 128. *i.e.* Faith, Hope, and Charity, who danced upon the right wheel of the triumphal car in the terrestrial Paradise, were sponsors for Ripheus 1000 years before our Saviour's birth. The views of Dante on this subject cannot be better expressed than in the celebrated passage of Dryden, in his Religio Laici, "We grant, 'tis true," &c.

Because our bliss is doubly sanctified,
In that the will of God, and our's, agree."
So by the image of that Bird divine—
(Making my feeble vision more intense)
Was given to me a pleasant medicine.
And e'en as a good harper twangs the chord
In concert with the singer's voice, that thence
The greater pleasure may the song afford ;—
So, while it spoke, did those two sparks of love
(For I recal their perfect sympathies)
Their flames together with its accents move,
Like the accordant twinkling of the eyes.

CANTO XXI.

ARGUMENT.

In the planet Saturn, or seventh heaven, are found contemplative spirits. A vision of Jacob's ladder. St. Pietro Damiano reproves the luxury of modern prelates. The voice of vengeance against them is heard to sound.

Now on the face of my loved Lady were
My eyes and mind again intently stayed;
Nor other object occupied my care:
Her look bore not the accustomed smile divine;
"And should I but indulge a smile," she said,
"The fate of Semele would soon be thine;
For since my beauty, higher as we rise
Towards the eternal palace, glows more bright
At every step, as witnessed by thine eyes,—
Were not a veil before its radiance cast,
Your mortal vision, dazzled at the sight,
Would shrink as leaves before the lightning blast.
Now to the seventh Light have we ascended,
Which underneath the Lion's burning breast
Is beaming downward, with his ardour blended.
Then let thine eyes afford a mirror true
Unto thy mind, that there may be expressed
What this resplendent glass shall give to view."

6. Semele having excited the jealousy of Juno, was instigated by her to ask Jupiter to reveal himself in all his majesty. He did so, and she was reduced to ashes. 13. The planet Saturn—in conjunction with Leo.

He who had relished the repast, whereon 19
Mine eyes were feasting in her holy face,
What time was changed their object, could alone
Know how delightful was to me the obeying
Her voice, which led me by celestial grace—
The one against the other pleasure weighing.
Within the crystal circling round the sky, 25
That bears its leader's name, beneath whose sway
Iniquity lay dead,—my soaring eye
Beheld a stair of golden colours bright,
On which so sharply fell the solar ray,
In vain I tried to reach its glorious height.
I saw too, coming down that brilliant stair, 31
Such multitude of splendours, that methought
Heaven's every light had been concentred there.
And as with one accord, at break of day,
The rooks bestir themselves, by nature taught
To chase the dew-drops from their wings away;
Some flying off, to re-appear no more— 37
Others repairing to their nests again,—
Some whirling round—then settling as before;—
Such to my fancy, and in substance like
To these, was that irradiate sparkling train,
As in their course a certain stair they strike:
And one among them, which approached the nearest, 43
Became so bright, I thought within my breast,
Full well I see the love to me thou bearest!
But she was silent, at whose signal I
Was wont to proffer or withhold request;
Wherefore I checked my speech, unwillingly.
Then she, who in the all-seeing eyes of Heaven 49
Was witness to my silence, said to me:
"Let reins unto thy strong desire be given."
And I: "No merit I myself possess
Makes me deserving of reply from thee:
But for her sake who bids me thee address,

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19. *i.e.* "He only who knows the delight I experienced in gazing on Beatrice, can tell the pleasure wherewith I obeyed her voice." 25 Saturn. 28. "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the Angels of God ascending and descending on it." Gen. xxviii. 12. 43. Pietro Damiano. See line 121.

O spirit blest, that dost thy form conceal 55
Within thine own delight, to me disclose
The reason of thy coming; and reveal
Why the sweet symphony of Paradise
In this high sphere is silent, when in those
Below, devoutly sound its melodies?"
"Mortal thy hearing as thy sight," she said; 61
"And the same reason now forbids the song,
That late in Beatrice the smile forbade.
I have descended this most holy stair,
Solely thy festive joyance to prolong,
Both by my voice, and by the garb I wear.
Not through more love more speedily I came, 67
Since love on high as great or greater shines,
As manifested by the beaming flame;
But that high love which bends us to the will
Of Him who rules the universe, assigns
To each the office he may best fulfil."
"O sacred Lamp," I said, "full well I see 73
Eternal Providence is here obeyed
Through love alone, that works spontaneously:
But what is difficult to understand
Is, why selection hath of thee been made
For this behest, from all thy numerous band."
Scarce utterance to these accents had I given, 79
Ere on its centre turned that Light, like mill
That whirls around, with rapid motion driven.
The love within it uttered then this sound:
"A heavenly lustre doth my spirit fill,
Piercing the radiant vest that wraps me round;
Whose ardent power, united with my sight, 85
So raises me above myself, I view
The essential Source of this celestial light,
Hence is derived the joy wherewith I glow;
Since in proportion as my sight is true,
The more in likeness to the flame I grow:
But thy demand—not she who in the abode 91
Of heaven is brightest—not the Seraphin
Who keep their eyes most keenly fixed on God,
May answer;—since so deeply sunk it lies
The inscrutable decrees of God within,
No creature thither may extend his eyes.

When thou returnest to the abode of man, 97
This truth bear with thee ;—that hereafter none
Presume such mighty mysteries to scan.
The mind enlightened here, on earth is dim ;
How can it then discern those things, which one
In heaven acknowledges too high for him ?"
Such limit to my speech his words assigned, 103
I persevered not ; but, with reverent fear,
To ask his name my question I confined.
"'Twixt the two shores of Italy are found
A line of hills so steep, thy country near,
That under them is heard the thunder-sound :
They form a ridge, by name of Catria known ; 109
Beneath whose shelter, dedicate to prayer,
Standeth a holy hermitage alone."
Thus the third time the spirit spake ;—then said,
His speech continuing :—" My thoughts were there
On God so wholly and intently stayed,
That though on olives it were mine to live, 115
I bore with ease the extremes of heat and cold,
Feeding my mind with thoughts contemplative.
That cloister to these heavens was wont to yield
Rich harvest once ; but empty now the fold ;
A truth ere many years to be revealed.
There Pietro Damiano was I hight ; 121
(Pietro the Sinner dwelt upon the shore
Of Adria in our Lady's house) :—and slight
The remnant of my life, when I was doomed
To wear that hat, degraded more and more,
As by successive heads it is assumed.
Cephas began his course barefoot and lean, 127
And the blest vessel of the Holy Ghost,—
With food contented howsoever mean.
Now are the modern Pastors so refined,
Attendants they require, a numerous host,

106. *i.e.* Betwixt the Tuscan Sea and the Adriatic rise the Apennines. 109. Of these Catria is the highest, and at the foot of it is the Abbey, now called Santa Croce. 118. By "that cloister" is meant the Abbey. 121. A Bishop of Ostia, distinguished by the pains he took to correct the abuses of the clergy. He here distinguishes himself from Pietro degli Onesti, surnamed "Il Peccator." 125. He says the clergy in his time were so depraved that he was reluctantly made a Cardinal.

To ease their sides and prop them from behind.
Their palfreys they o'erlay with mantles wide,
So that one skin doth o'er two beasts extend:
How long will heaven with patience view such pride!"
This spoken, I beheld full many a flame
From step to step in circling form descend;
While, every turn, more beauteous they became.
About the flame which spake to me they drew,
Uttering a cry that in my ears so sounded,
Nought upon earth might give a semblance true:
I understood not, by the crash confounded.

CANTO XXII.

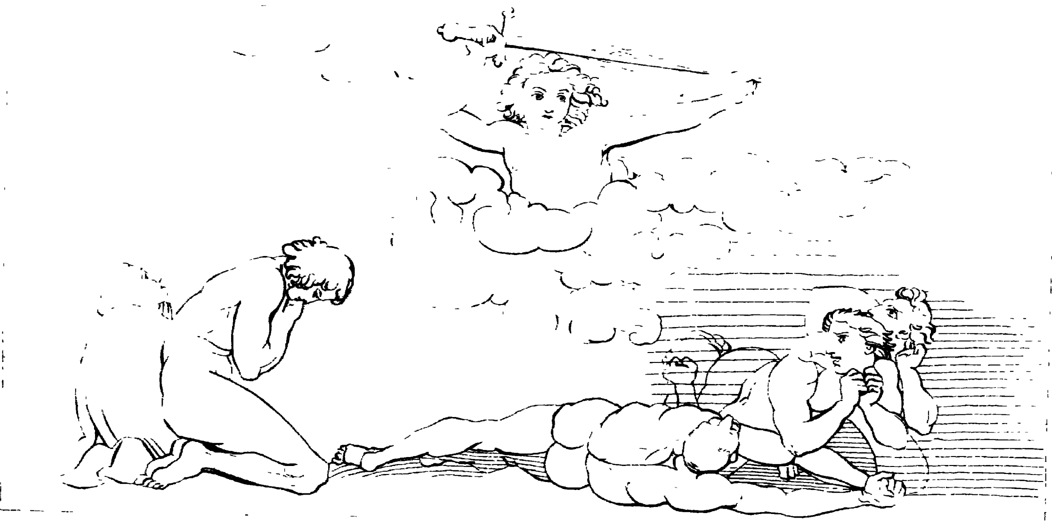
ARGUMENT.

Among other contemplative spirits in the planet Saturn, Dante meets St. Benedict, who inveighs against the corruption of the monks. Mounting to the constellation of the Gemini, or eighth heaven, he looks down upon the earth.

Oppressed with stupor, turned I to my guide,
E'en as an infant, ever wont to run
Thither where most 'tis able to confide:
And she, like to a mother, who gives aid
In haste unto her pale and panting son,
By words of well known consolation, said:
"Dost thou not know thou art in heaven?—not know
That Holiness pervades each part of heaven,
And that from righteous zeal such blessings flow?
Now judge what change in thee the song had wrought,
What change too, had one smile by me been given,
Since with such power the shout alone is fraught.
And had the entreaty uttered in that cry
Been understood, to thee had then been known
The vengeance thou shalt witness ere thou die.
Not hastily the sword is brandished here,
Or tardily, save in his view alone,

137. *i.e.* From the steps of the above mentioned stair. 140. In this cry are denounced the vices of the Priests. See next canto, line 13.

1. See note to last canto, line 140. 7. Beatrice tells him that the shout he heard was the effect of righteous zeal. 13. *i.e.* "If the prayer of that cry had been understood, you would have foreknown the vengeance impending upon the Priests."



NOT HASTILY THE SWORD IS BRANDISHED HERE
OR TARDILY SAVE IN HIS VIEW ALONE
WHO WAITS IT OR IN LONGING OR IN FEAR

Who waits it or in longing or in fear.
But now to other parts thine eyesight turn;
And if, as I direct, thy look thou raise,
Full many illustrious souls shalt thou discern."
Mine eyes I then uplifted, as she taught;
And saw a hundred little spheres, whose blaze
Of beauty grew, by mutual radiance caught.
I stood like one who strong desire restrains,
And, overwhelmed by his excessive fear,
Reft of the power of questioning remains:
When lo, the largest and the loveliest
Of all these Pearls, advancing, now drew near,
To satisfy the wish I had suppressed.
Then from within I heard: "Couldst thou have seen
As I have, how the flame of charity
Among us burns, thy wish expressed had been:
But lest thou shouldest delay thy lofty aim
By this reluctance, I will now reply
E'en to the cherished thought thou dost not name.
This mountain, on whose side Cassino lies,
A nation formerly inhabited,
Given up to vice and foul idolatries:
And I am he who taught them first to praise
His glorious name, who o'er the world hath spread
That truth which doth our fallen nature raise.
His grace illumed me with such ardent ray,
That the surrounding people I reclaimed
From the vile rites which led the world astray.
Those other fires, now all contemplative,
Erewhile were men, and with that warmth enflamed,
Whence holy flowers and fruits their growth derive:
Maccarius here, here Romoald, and here
My brethren, who within the cloister wall
Fixed firm their feet, and kept their heart sincere."
I answered: "The affection that to me
Thy speech betokeneth, and the looks ye all,
O fervent spirits, shed benignantly,
Enlarge my confidence, e'en as the rose,

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28. St. Benedict. 37. He founded a monastery on the side of the Cassine mount, and built an altar there to the true God, in place of an oracle of Apollo.

Expanding 'neath the sun's enlivening ray,
Doth every leaf in all its breadth disclose.
Wherefore, if I may share such ample grace,
Do thou, dear Father, certify, I pray,
If I shall ever see thee face to face."
"In the last sphere, my brother," he replied, 61
"To thy request fulfilment shall be given,
Where all desires are amply satisfied.
There every wish is perfect and mature;
And that too is the only part of heaven
Where all things free from change for aye endure.
There bounds are none; no pole there guidance lends; 67
And hence is lost to stretch of human ken
The stair that thither from our earth ascends;
Whose top the Patriarch saw in dreamy cloud
High towering to that lofty region, when
Descending Angels seemed its steps to crowd:
But no one now, to mount that ladder, leaves 73
The earth behind him; and my rules remain,
Wasting the page that useless ink receives.
The Abbey's walls, devoted once to good,
Are dens become; the cowls, that did contain
Good nutriment, now swell with evil food.
Not usury so thwarts the Almighty pleasure 79
As that pernicious fruit which doth dispose
The heart of Monks to riot above measure:
For all entrusted to the Church's care
Belongs to God's own poor, and not to those
Whose kin, or worse than kin, the bounty share.
So soft is flesh of mortals, that on earth 85
A good beginning doth no longer last
Than while an oak may bring its fruit to birth.
Peter began his convent without gold
Or silver,—I built mine by prayer and fast;—
Humility for Francis won a fold.
If thou reflect how each began, then view 91
To what an end doth such beginning lead,
Thou'lt see the white assume a darker hue.

69. See note to xxi. 28. 82. See Inf. xi. 109. 88. See Inf. xix. 91. 91. Pietro Damiano. See note, canto xxi. 121. 93. *i.e.* Christian virtues are changed by the clergy into the opposite vices.

Jordan driven backward,—and the sea, that fled
At God's command, were miracles indeed
Greater than those here needful."—This he said;—
Then hasted to his comrades; and when they
As in a cluster congregated were,
All like a whirlwind took their heavenward way.
Me likewise in their train by one sole sign
That gentle Lady forced to mount the stair;
So strongly wrought her spirit upon mine.
Nor on our earth with such velocity
Was aught e'er carried downward or aloft,
Whose rapid flight with mine compared might be.
O reader, by my hope to see that blest
And holy realm again, (a hope that oft
Makes me bewail my faults, and strike my breast)
Thou couldest not thrust thy finger in a flame,
And draw it out in such short space, as I
Beheld the Twins, and mounted to the same.
O glorious constellation! Light divine!
Pregnant with inspiration from on high,
To which I owe whate'er of skill be mine:—
With you his rise, his setting had with you
He who of all things living is the soul,
When first the air of Tuscany I drew:
And when, through grace vouchsafed, to me was given
To enter the high wheel in which ye roll,
Your's was the realm allotted me in heaven.
For you devoutly now my spirit sighs,
In fervent hope to be endued with might
Befitting such an arduous enterprize.
And Beatrice began: "Thou art so near
Thy last abode of bliss, that now thy sight
Must surely have become acute and clear:
Therefore, ere loftier regions thou explore,
Look down; and taking of the world a view,
See what a vast extent thou hast passed o'er.

94. "The sea saw it and fled; Jordan was driven back." Psalm cxiv. *i.e* "If great miracles were performed then, less miracles will not be denied now. God will avenge his people against a corrupt and tyrannical priesthood." 112. The poet apostrophizes the Gemini, under whose influence he supposed himself born, when the sun was in that constellation. See Inf. xv. 56. 116. The Sun.

So shall thy heart with all the joy it may
Present itself to that triumphal crew,
Which through this ether speeds its blissful way."
Back through the seven-fold spheres I cast mine eyes; 133
And smiled, as of this little globe I took
A glance, its mean aspect to recognize.
Him who least prizes it I most esteem;
And whoso to the other world his look
Directs, him truly noble may one deem.
The daughter of Latona saw I there 139
Without the shade that makes her surface dim,
And led me to suppose her dense or rare.
There I endured the aspect of thy son,
Hyperion; and saw how, near to him,
And round him, Maia and Dione run.
I saw how, 'twixt his son and father, Jove 145
Attempered shone; and, on their course intent,
Saw how they change their station as they move.
The size was visible of all the seven,
And with what speed they move was evident,
And what their distance each from each in heaven.
This little globe, which fills us with such pride, 151
I, circling with the eternal Twins, discerned
From mountain top to shore extended wide:—
Then on the beauteous eyes mine eyes I turned.

CANTO XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

Dante beholds the triumph of Christ, attended by an infinite number of Saints.

E'EN as the bird that resting in the nest 1
Of her sweet brood, the sheltering boughs among,
While all things are enwrapt in night's dark vest,—
Now eager to behold the looks she loves,
And to find food for her impatient young,
(Whence labour grateful to a mother proves)

141. See canto ii. 60. 142. His vision was so sharpened that he was able to look upon the Sun, of which Hyperion is fabled to be the father. 144. The mothers of Mercury and Venus, and used as synonymous. 145. Betwixt Mars and Saturn.

Forestals the time, high perched upon the spray,
And with impassioned zeal the sun expecting,
Anxiously waiteth the first break of day;
Thus stood my Lady with an earnest gaze
Upright—her face unto that part directing
Where Phœbus his impetuous steeds delays:
And I, beholding her thus fondly bent, 13
Was like to one, who with desiring eye
Hopes somewhat else, and rests in hope content.
But little was the interval that came
Betwixt the expectance and reality,
Since heaven anon was wrapt in brighter flame:
And Beatrice exclaimed: "Behold the host 19
Of Christ triumphant, and the plenteous store
Of fruit which these celestial circles boast."
All glowing seemed with fire her lovely face;
And in her eye such looks of joy she wore,
Words would in vain their heavenly lustre trace.
As, when the moon is at the full and clear, 25
Diana smiles the eternal Nymphs among,
Who deck the heaven's illimitable sphere,
I saw high o'er ten thousand Lamps divine
A single Sun, that lit up all the throng,
As doth our sun the stars that round him shine:
And with such clearness through the living light 31
Shone the translucent Substance on mine eyes,
That they refused to endure the dazzling sight.
O Beatrice, my sweet, my precious guide!
Then she: "The blaze that quells thy faculties
Glows with a virtue nothing can abide.
Here is the Wisdom, here the Power, that bade 37
A way be opened 'twixt the earth and heaven,—
So long to many an anxious prayer delayed."
As bursts on high to revel in the skies
Fire from thick cloud, by force ethereal riven,
And falls to earth, though nature prompt to rise;
So 'mid the dainties of that heavenly board 43
My wandering mind was lost to every sense,

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11. The centre of the heavens—where the sun appears to move slower.
29. Our Saviour—also called (line 32), "the translucent Substance," and, (line 37), "the Wisdom and the Power"

And what then happened cannot now record.
Open mine eyes, and gaze on me awhile;
Since thou hast witnessed splendours so intense,
Well mayest thou bear the lustre of my smile.
I was like one who doth in part retain 49
The impression of a vision passed away,
And tries to bring it to his mind in vain,—
When I this proffer heard, so graciously
Bestowed, that never to my dying day
The sound shall vanish from my memory.
Were all those voices now to lend their aid, 55
That Polyhymnia and the sister Nine
Rich through the sweetness of their milk have made,
Not to the thousandth part would they portray
The sacred beauty of that smile divine
Which lit the holy face with gladsome ray:
And therefore in my sketch of Paradise 61
The hallowed song to leap must be constrained,
As when a chasm before our pathway lies.
But whoso thinks how weighty is the theme,
And that by mortal shoulder 'tis sustained,
Will blame not, though to stagger it may seem.
To stem this sea may no light bark essay, 67
Or careless pilot, who his toil would spare;
Since deep the daring prow must cleave its way.
" Why of my face art thou enamoured so,
That thou beholdest not the garden, where
Flowers nurtured under Christ's effulgence blow?
Here is the Rose, in which the Word Divine 73
Made itself flesh:—the Lilies too that taught
By their sweet fragrance wisdom's path, here shine."
Thus Beatrice;—I, ready to obey
Her bidding, my enfeebled eyesight brought
To bear the lustre of that fervid ray.
As lit by sunbeam, that from broken cloud 79
Shines through direct, a mead of flowers I've seen
Beneath, sheltered myself in sylvan shroud,
So saw I numerous hosts in splendours dight

67. See opening of canto ii. 73. The Rose is the Virgin Mary.—The Lilies are Saints. See Ecclesiasticus xxxix. 14. 79. This simile represents our Saviour, unseen himself, irradiating the Saints beneath him.

Shone down upon by rays of brilliant sheen,—
The source of splendour not revealed to sight.
O Power benign, who, imaged in these rays,
Didst thus exalt thyself the skies above,
That my weak vision might endure the blaze.
The name of that fair flower, which morn and night
My lips invoke, within my soul now strove,
Bidding me watch intent the greater light:
And as I marked the grandeur and the glow
Of that pure living Star, which all excelled
On high, as once it vanquished all below,
A little Torch within this heaven came down,
And round about that starry splendour held
A circling course, in fashion of a crown.
The sweetest melody e'er heard on earth,
And most attractive to the soul, would sound
Like cloud which, riven, gives the thunder birth,
Compared in tone with the angelic Lyre,
Wherewith is that most beauteous Sapphire crowned
Which decks heaven's summit in its own attire.
"I am Angelic Love, and breathe the fire
Of holy joy, from that pure virgin breast
Derived, which lodged erewhile the world's Desire;
And still, O Queen of heaven, this task be mine,
As long as in the highest sphere a guest,
Following thy Son, thou makest it more divine."
Such song from the melodious circle came,
When all the rest of that effulgent host
In concert sang with Mary's glorious name.
The royal cloak, o'er all heaven's volume spread,
That most intensely glowing, and the most
Warmed with the breath of God, around it shed,
So high above us reared its inmost cope,
That from the lower sphere where I abode
It was not yet within my vision's scope:

87. Our Saviour had withdrawn the brightness of His presence, in order that Dante might discern the beatified spirits. 88. Mary, the Rose, is the greatest light of those remaining when our Saviour is withdrawn. 94. The angel Gabriel,—who revolves around the Virgin, crowning her with his glory. He is the "angelic lyre," (line 100,) and testifies the joy the angels felt at the Incarnation. 112. The ninth heaven, which envelopes the other eight. (See "Material Heavens.")

Wherefore I vainly strove to view the course
Of that encircled flame, as high it rode
The heavens, ascending to its primal source.
And as an infant at its mother's breast 121
Raises its arms when fully satisfied,
(The inward love by outward joy expressed)
So raised their lofty summits every flame,
In guise that manifestly testified
How deep the love they bore to Mary's name.
And pausing there, they hovered in my sight, 127
Chanting 'Regina Cœli' in such measure,
E'en yet the sweetness thrills me with delight.
Oh! how abundant is the harvest stowed
In those receptacles of heavenly treasure,
Which upon earth a seed so goodly sowed!
Here they rejoice, and taste the wealth of old 133
Acquired with many a tear in Babylon,
During their exile, where they spurned the gold:
Here shares the honour of the victory
Gained by the aid of God, and Mary's Son,
Among the old and recent Patriarchs, He
Who holds the keys, and this high glory won. 139

CANTO XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

St. Peter examines Dante concerning Faith.

"O YE, elected to the banquet high 1
Of the ever blessed Lamb, whence ye obtain
Food that doth every craving satisfy;
Since of the crumbs that from your table fall
This man through mercy doth a foretaste gain,
Ere death at the appointed season call,—
Regard his inexhaustible desires, 7

118. Dante being still in the eighth heaven, which interposed between him and the transparent empyrean, could not follow thither with his eyes the ascent of the Virgin encircled by the angel Gabriel. 128. The beginning of an anthem sung to the Virgin. 133. The celestial bread the saints have acquired in the tribulations of the world. 135. The leading "dove si lascia l'oro." is adopted.

1. Beatrice speaks, addressing the elect, and interceding for Dante. "Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." Rev. xix. 9.

And with a little dew assuage them;—Ye
Drink ever of the fount to which he aspires."
Thus Beatrice:—anon these spirits came
Around us in a circle, joyfully,—
Darting, like comets, each a living flame.
Like wheels which motion to a clock supply,— 13
So turning, that the first scarce seems to move,
While to the sight the last appears to fly,—
These lucid circles dancing even so,
According to their several shares of love,
Appeared endued with motion swift or slow.
From one, of beauty, as I marked, supreme, 19
Issued a fire that glowed so brilliantly,
It far surpassed all others in its beam;
And three times about Beatrice it wound,
Pouring forth so divine a minstrelsy,
That fancy faileth to record the sound:
Wherefore my pen leaps o'er, unskilled to write; 25
For if imagination fail,—still less
May words essay to paint such colours bright.
"O holy sister, thy impassioned prayer,
And love, impelled by fond devotedness,
Have drawn me down from yonder mansion fair."
Thus to my Lady did that flame elect, 31
Soon as around her it had ceased to move,
Its voice in answer to her words direct.
"Light of that holy man, to whom our Lord
Conveyed the keys of this our joy and love—
Keys of that wondrous happiness here stored—
Question him more or less, as pleaseth thee, 37
Concerning Faith—that Faith by which of old
Thou wert endued with power to walk the sea.
His love, his hope, his faith are manifest
To thee, who dost that heavenly Glass behold,
In which all things are visibly expressed.
But since by the true faith this kingdom gained 43
Her citizens, 'tis meet that he disclose
It's power, and tell how faith may be obtained."
His armour as the bachelor puts on,

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28. St. Peter answers Beatrice, his sister in glory. 46. *i e.* "The bachelor, or disputant in the schools, prepares himself for discussion."

Nor speaks, until the master doth propose
The question they are to contend upon;
So I with reasons armed me, to prepare
(While she was speaking, and I silent heard)
For such a theme and such a questioner.
"Good Christian, what is Faith, to me make known?"
Straightway I raised my forehead at the word
Unto the Light whence issued such a tone;
Then turned to Beatrice, who on me bent
So satisfied a look as said: "Let flow
The streams within thy secret bosom pent."
"O may that Grace which bids me now confess
Before so great a Captain, power bestow,
That I may worthily my thoughts express.
Father," I added, "as of old was taught
By thy dear brother's pen unerring, (who
Rome by thy aid to pure religion brought)—
Faith is the substance of things hoped for, and
The evidence of things not yet in view:
This is its essence as I understand."
"Thou comprehendest rightly," then I heard
"If to thy reason it appeareth clear,
Why such a definition be preferred."
I answered him: 'The mighty mysteries,
Whose full reality is opened here,
Are so concealed on earth from mortal eyes,
That they exist but in belief alone,
On which our hope is so entirely founded,
That faith and substance are accounted one.
To this belief all righteousness we trace;
On this alone our reasonings must be grounded;
Hence Faith instead of argument hath place."
Then heard I: "If, as understood by thee,
Were understood all knowledge gained on earth,
Then would be found no room for sophistry."
Thus breathed the spirit, warmed with love and joy;
Then added: "Of this coin is proved the worth,
Both as regards the weight and the alloy:
But is it in thy purse?" "Yes," I replied,

62. St. Paul is here called the brother of St. Peter. 64. "Now faith is the substance," &c. Heb. xi. 1. 85. *i.e.* In your heart.

"So shining and so round, it renders clear
All things that in its impress are descried."
From the deep Light whose radiance there did glow,
Sounded these words: "Whence came this Jewel dear,
From which doth every other virtue flow?"
Then I: "The Spirit's most abundant shower,
Poured out upon the Pages New and Old,
Hath of itself a syllogistic power;
And hath convinced me with a strength so full,
That in comparison with it, I hold
Each other demonstration weak and dull."
Then he: "The Old and Latter Testament,
Which wrought conviction on thy faculties,—
What is the proof that they from God were sent?"
"The works that followed, proof sufficient bear,"
I said: "and Nature, to accomplish these,
Ne'er heated iron, nor anvil struck."—"Declare
Who gives to thee assurance," was replied,
"That these works had existence; sithence he
Who would convince thee swears it—none beside."
"If without miracles the world was brought
To Christian faith," I answered, "this would be
A hundred times the greatest ever wrought:
And so it was,—that, poor and hungry, thou
Enteredst the field to propagate that tree
Once a rich vine—a stock unfruitful now."
Then was re-echoed through the lofty sphere,
"O God we offer praises unto Thee,"
In tones well worthy of an Angel's ear.
And that great Baron who by questions drew
Me gently on from bough to bough, until
The last leaves now appeared within our view,
Began again: "That Grace, whose influence sweet
Thy mind doth with a loving converse thrill,
Hath so far furnished thee with utterance meet,
That I approve the answers I have heard;
But now behoves thee thy belief declare,
And who it was explained the holy word."
"O sacred Sire, O Spirit, who dost ken

96. *i.e.* "The internal evidences of Christianity surpass all others."
100. *i.e.* Miracles—in which Nature has no part. 115. St. Peter.

The faith which bade thee to the tomb repair,
Outstripping younger-feet," began I then,—
"You wish me to explain the mode whereby 127
This faith so rapidly within me strove;
And also wherein lay its energy.
I answer, I believe in one God,—sole—
Eternal – who, unmoved Himself, doth move
The universe by Love's supreme controul.
Proofs physical, and metaphysical 133
Not only have I; but through Moses, and
The Prophets, and the Gospel and through all
The Psalms, and through your works, to which was given
A holy influence,—I understand
The truth which floweth down to earth from heaven
And in Three Persons is my faith confest— 139
An Essence so conjoined, and yet so trine,
They equally admit of *sunt* and *est*.
And what the evangelic Books reveal
Of this profound and blissful state divine,
Hath on my heart impressed its truthful seal.
This is the source,—this is the spark, which spreads 145
To vivid flame; and, like a star in heaven,
With splendour dight, o'er me effulgence sheds."
E'en as a master, from a servant hearing
Tidings that please – as soon as they are given,
His arms around him casts;—such kindly bearing
Was by the Apostolic Light expressed; 151
Who, soon as my confessions he had heard,
Thrice, chanting loud, encircled me, and blessed;
Such was the pleasure that my speech conferred.

CANTO XXV.

ARGUMENT.

Dante expresses a hope that his poem may be the means of restoring him with honour to his country. St. James examines him concerning Hope. St. John appears.

SHOULD it befal that e'er the Sacred lay,— 1
On which have laid their hand both Heaven and Earth.

126. St. John arrived first at the sepulchre. 141. *i.e.* Of singular and plural.

THE TRIUMPH OF CHRIST



While year by year my body pined away—
O'ercome the cruelty that is my bar
From the fair fold where I, a lamb, had birth,
Foe to the ravening Wolves its peace who mar;
With other voice, with other fleece shall I 7
Poet return; and at that shrine be crowned
Which my baptismal fountain did supply:
For there I entered on the faith, whose vow
Proclaims the souls to God's high service bound;
Hence Peter waved his hands around my brow.
Then towards us moved a Light from out that band 13
Whence, as by Christ ordained, those first-fruits came,
Left for his Vicars in this nether land.
To me, my Lady, fraught with joy intense;
"Behold, behold, the Baron great of fame,
Who to Galicia draws such crowd immense."
As when unto his partner's side, the Dove 19
Approaches near,—both fondly circling round,
And cooing, show the fervour of their love;
So these great heirs of immortality
Received each other with the festive sound
Of praise for angels' food enjoyed on high.
But when their gratulations ended were, 25
Each stood before me silent, and so glowed,—
Mine eyes the fiery lustre could not bear.
Then Beatrice thus spake with smiling brow:
"O glorious soul, by whom the riches stowed
In this our palace are described, do thou
Make Hope resound throughout this heavenly height: 31
Thou knowest, who didst personify it, oft

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2. *i.e.* Which human reason and divine authority have both sanctioned. See De Mon. lib. ii. p. 60. Fraticelli. 5. The fair sheepfold is Florence, Dante's birth-place. He contrasts his own peaceful disposition with the violence of his countrymen; and the scornful voices that banished him, with the acclamations he anticipated on his return as a Poet. 8. In the font of St. John. 13. From out the band of the Apostles, whence St. Peter, the first vicar of Christ, came to Dante in the last canto, now came St. James. 18. When his sepulchre was discovered at Compostella in Galicia, numbers flocked to it from all parts of the world. 29. This is addressed to St. James, "If any of you lack wisdom," &c.; and again, "Every good and perfect gift," &c. Epist. i. 5, 17. 32. Dante supposes Faith, Hope, and Charity to have been represented at the Transfiguration by St. Peter, St. James, and St. John respectively.

As Jesus o'er the Three shed stronger light."
"Lift up thy head; and be thy heart assured;
For all that come from earth to us aloft
Must by our fervent radiance be matured."
Such cheer to me the second flame addressed; 37
Whereat I lifted to the hills mine eyes,
Which erst with too great burden were oppressed.
"Our Emperor willeth of his own free grace
That thou, admitted to his mysteries,
Should'st see, ere death, his loved ones face to face;
Whereby—the truth of this our Court revealed— 43
The Hope that upon earth awakens love,
May comfort both to thee and others yield,
Say what it is, and how to thee it came;
And whence within thy heart its blossoms throve."
Thus spake to me again the second Flame.
And she, that pitying one,—the gentle guide— 49
Who imped my pinions for such lofty flight,
My words anticipating, thus replied:
"No child hath the Church militant in whom
Hope is more strong, as seen in letters bright
Traced in that Sun, whose rays our band illume.
Wherefore a passage unto him is given 55
From Egypt to Jerusalem, or ere
He in the conflict to the end hath striven.
The other points (asked with the intent that he
On his return to earth may witness bear
How much that virtue is beloved by thee)
I leave to him;—not hard will they be found, 61
Nor furnish boasting:—let him make reply;
And may he in the grace of God abound."
Like scholar who his teacher doth obey
Promptly, when conscious of ability,
And he would fain his readiness display;
"Hope," said I, "is an expectation sure 67
Of future glory—the effect of Grace,
And previous merit:—its effulgence pure
From many a star descends; but o'er me fell

34. St. James speaks. 49. Beatrice. 56. *i.e.* "From earth to Paradise." 67. "'Tis counted merit when we grace receive." Canto xxix. 66. The third question asked, line 47, is next answered. 70. "They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for

The earliest radiance that my heart can trace
From His sweet songs—the Bard of Israel:
'All they that know thy name shall hope in Thee,'
He chanted in his lofty melodies—
Name known to all who hold the faith with me.
His drops in thy Epistle thou didst then
On me so sprinkle, that, embued with these,
To others I dispense the precious rain."
While thus I spoke, with swift and frequent glare
From out the living breast of that bright flame
Flashed forth a lamp, like lightning quivering there;
Then breathed these words: "The hope with which I glow—
My constant guide until I overcame,
And issued conqueror from a world of woe—
Bids me again address thee; and on me
It will confer delight, if thou relate
What is the promise hope holds out to thee."
I answered him: "Both Testaments declare
(As here evinced) how blissful is their state
Ordained of God friendship with Him to share.
Isaiah says that in their native land
Each with a twofold vesture shall be dight;
And by his words, this life I understand.
The same more clearly hath your Brother shown,
When, speaking of the garments pure and white,
This revelation he to us makes known."
Ere the completion of this speech, I heard
Above us sound, "My hope hath been in Thee;"
And all the circles answered at the word.
Another then displayed so bright a ray,
That such a one with Cancer could we see,
A winter's month would be continual day.
And as a virgin, rising joyously,

ever and ever." Daniel xii. 3. 73. "They that know thy name will put their trust in Thee." Psalm ix. 10. 76. He was indebted to St. James, whose Epistle, he says, teems with the language of David. 81. St. James. 91. "In their land they shall possess the double: everlasting joy shall be unto them."...."He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, and covered me with the robe of righteousness." Isaiah lxi. 7, 10. 94. St. John, the "brother" of St. James. See Rev. vii. 9. 101. St. John—so bright, that if such a star were to shine throughout the month following the winter solstice, in conjunction with Cancer, it would be perpetual day.

Enters the dance, bent only on improving
The nuptial welcome,—not through vanity;
So did I witness that attempered Flame
Draw near the two who in a ring were moving,
(As well the ardour of their love became)
And mingle with their words, and with their strains;
The while my Lady watched with tranquil look,
Like bride who silent and composed remains.
"Lo, this is he who on the bosom lay
Of our great Pelican; and undertook,
Beneath the Cross, his high emprise that day."
Thus spoke to me my Lady; yet she wore
No mark upon her countenance displayed
Of more attention than she showed before.
Like one who strains his visual faculty
To view the sun eclipsed by partial shade,
Losing his sight through strong desire to see;
So that last Flame I kenned with vision keen,
While this was uttered: "Why thine eyesight strain
To see a thing that cannot here be seen?
My body upon earth is earth; and still
With others shall on earth below remain,
Till God the number of the elect fulfil.
In the blest cloister, with the twofold vest,
Dwell the two Lights who hence went up on high:
To earth returning these my words attest."
This said,—the flaming circle sought repose;
And with it straight was stilled the melody,
Which from the three in blended sound arose,—
Stilled, like to oars that, dashing through the brine,—
If rest be needed, or if risk arise,

106. St. John is described as doing honour to Beatrice, (who is represented as a Bride,) by accompanying St. Peter and St. James both in the dance and in the words and notes of their song. 112. St. John, who lay on the bosom of our Saviour, here called a "Pelican," because he feeds us with his own blood. 117. Beatrice knew St. John was there in Spirit only. Dante, on the contrary, bears in mind the saying of our Saviour with regard to him: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" St. John xxi. 22. This the Evangelist proceeds to solve. 127. In the empyrean.—Lombardi explains the "twofold vest" to be—one a glorification of the soul, the other of the body; which the elect will receive after the resurrection, but with which our Saviour and the Virgin, "the two lights," are invested.

Are all suspended at the steerer's sign.
Oh! how my mind was struck by fear of ill,
When, turning round to look on Beatrice,
I saw her not,—though I was near her still,
And in the happy realm of Paradise! 139

CANTO XXVI.

ARGUMENT.

St. John examines Dante concerning Charity, or the Love of God. Interview with Adam.

WHILE I with dazzled eyes in doubt remained, 1
Forth from the lucid flame that quelled my sight
A voice arose which my attention chained,
Saying: "Till thou regain thy visual sense,
Now lost upon my form, it will be right
That we by converse find some recompense.
Say then what object rests thy soul upon; 7
For know—and let this confidence be thine—
Thy sight, although bewildered, is not gone;
Since she who leads thee through this region blest
Hath in her look that influence divine
Which Ananias' hand of old possessed."
"Let her," I said, "or soon or late impart 13
Relief unto the eyes, through which She passed,
Whose fire is ever glowing in my heart.
The Good Supreme, who makes this Court content,
Is unto me the First as well as Last
Of all the love that Scripture texts present."
The self-same voice that late relieved the dread 19
Which with such sudden blaze my sense o'erthrew,
Incited me to speak again, and said:
"Behoves thee now through finer sieve to effect
Thy explanation, and to tell me who
To such a target did thy bow direct."
Then I: "By what Philosophy hath taught, 25
And by the Revelation flowing hence,
This love in me its first impression wrought:

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1. Dazzled with the contemplation of St. John, at the end of the last canto, Dante is in doubt whether he shall ever recover his sight, and see Beatrice again. 17. *i.e.* The Alpha and the Omega. 22. St. John speaks. 25. Dante replies that he was first led to the love of God by Natural Philosophy, and secondly by Revelation.

For Goodness, rightly understood, to love
Excites, and in proportion to the sense
Of its abundance, is its power to move.
Unto that Essence then—so excellent, 31
That good of every kind, beyond it found,
Is but a ray from its effulgence sent—
With stronger impulse than to aught beside,
By love inflamed, the mind of each must bound,
In whom the maxims of this truth abide.
Such truth is rendered plain unto my mind 37
By him who the first love to me displays
Of all the eternal substances:—I find
That by the unerring One the same is sealed,
Who, speaking of Himself to Moses, says:
'To thee shall all my goodness be revealed.'
This truth moreover is declared by thee 43
At the opening of thy pages, which proclaim
In clearest terms the mighty mystery."
Then heard I this: "Since reason's voice approves,
And Revelation too enjoins the same—
Reserve for God the choicest of thy loves.
But tell me if by other cords thou feel 49
Thyself attracted unto God;—and all
The heart-constraining bonds of love reveal."
Why Christ's blest Eagle this inquiry made,
I straight discovered, and the earnest call
To full confession; wherefore I obeyed:—
"All the incentives that the soul can bind, 55
And make it turn to God, fresh impulse give
To the warm gratitude that fills my mind:
The outward world's existence, and my own,
The death endured by Him that I might live,
This promised land, by ardent hope foreshown,
And the conviction spoken of before, 61
Have drawn me from the sea of erring love,
And set me safe on Truth's celestial shore.
Love for each Plant that in the garden grows
Of the Eternal Gardener I prove,

38. Plato. 42. "I will make all my goodness pass before thee." Exodus xxxiii. 19. 41. St. John, chap. 1. 52. St. John is called an Eagle, as surpassing all others in describing the Divinity. 64. *i.e.* Each saint upon earth.

Proportioned to the goodness he bestows."
I ceased: when through the heaven resounded slowly, 67
By myriads sung, a strain surpassing sweet,—
My Lady joining—"Holy, Holy, Holy."
And as the radiance of the early light,
Which the strong visual spirit runs to meet,
Breaks through the enchaining slumber of the night;
And the awakened one hates what he sees; 73
(From sense of everything around withheld,
Till judgment re-illume his faculties);
Thus, whatsoever could my vision mar,
The piercing eyes of Beatrice dispelled,
Shooting their splendour thousand miles afar.
Wherefore—my clouded eyesight now revived,— 79
I made inquiry, still in some amaze,
Who was the soul that newly had arrived.
"Within those beams," to me my Lady said,
"Views his Creator with admiring gaze
The earliest soul that Primal Wisdom made."
Like leaves that bend before the passing breeze, 85
And presently uprear themselves again,
Through impulse of their native energies;
Thus to the ground I bowed me as she spoke,
Awe-struck—then raised my confidence amain;
So strong a wish to speak my spirit woke.
"O thou, sole fruit," I answered, "upon earth 91
Brought into being, ripe—O sire of man,
To whom is daughter both by law and birth
Each married woman—thee do I implore
Devoutly; and since thou my wish dost scan,
Through eagerness to hear I say no more."
As by the movement of his furry skin 97
His feelings oft an animal makes known,
Displaying outwardly the joy within—
So did the first created soul attest
By the outward lustre of his form alone
How great his joy to answer my request:
Then breathed: "Thy wish is understood by me— 103
Though uttered not—with impress clearer far

77. Dante's sight is restored, as St. John said it would be (line 11), by a look from Beatrice. 93. Daughter of Adam, as the common father; and daughter in law, as married to one of his sons.

Than whatsoe'er is best perceived by thee;
Since I behold it in that Mirror true,
In which—though other things reflected are,
No image of itself is given to view.
Your wish it is to know how long the time, 109
Since in that garden I was placed, whence led
A stair so lofty to this realm sublime—
How long its lovely prospects I enjoyed—
Wherefore God's anger I there merited—
And what the dialect by me employed.
'Twas not alone through tasting of the tree, 115
My son, that I so long in banishment
Remained, but that I broke God's high decree.
There, whence thy faithful Lady Virgil drew,
Wishing to reach these blessed courts, I spent
Four thousand, and three hundred years, and two.
And while I dwelt on earth 'twas mine to ken 121
The sun relume the lights he passes through
Nine hundred times united to thrice ten.
The language that I spoke was lost to man,
Ere Nimrod and his most audacious crew
Their not-to-be-accomplished work began:
For no effect by human reason wrought 127
Was ever lasting—through the strong desire
Of man for change, by starry influence taught.
Nature ordaineth man to speak; but she
Leaves it to you a language to acquire,
Or this, or that, as may your pleasure be.
Ere I descended to the gulph of hell, 133
The Good Supreme, from whom proceeds that joy
Which swathes me round, was called by mortals El:
Eli the name that afterwards men chose,—
Since custom, altering the words they employ,
Is like the leaf—one comes, another goes.
In that blest mount which boasts an eminence 139
Highest above the sea—pure and unstained

115. The sin of Adam consisted in disobedience. 120. From 5232 (the years from the creation to the death of our Saviour) deduct 930, the number Adam lived (line 123), and there remains 4302, the period Adam says he was in Limbo before our Saviour rescued him. 133. *i.e.* to Limbo. See Inf. iv. 55. 139. Purgatory,—upon which was situated the terrestrial Paradise—and where our first parents are supposed to have remained only a few hours.

THE NINTH SPHERE 34



"GLORY TO FATHER SON AND HOLY GHOST
NOW THROUGHOUT PARADISE WAS HEARD TO SOUND" P.

I lived a life of spotless innocence;
And there the fourth part of a day remained."

CANTO XXVII.

ARGUMENT.

St. Peter severely animadverts upon the avarice of his successors; and the angels sympathise in his indignation. Dante is borne up to the ninth heaven.

"Glory to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost!" 1
Now throughout Paradise was heard to sound;
So that my soul in ecstacy was lost.
All that I saw appeared to me one smile
Caught from the universal world around,—
Mine eyes and ears inebriate the while.
O bliss ineffable! O rapture pure! 7
O life of love and peace! O wealth, that knows
No wish beyond, unsullied and secure!
Stood the four Torches burning in my sight;
When lo, the one that first before me rose
Began to clothe itself in stronger light;
And manifested shortly such aspect 13
As would be Jupiter's, if Mars and he
Were birds, and change of plumage should effect.
That foresight, which to all who here abide
Assigns their proper lot and ministry,
Had silenced the blest band on every side,
When I these accents heard: "If changed in hue 19
My countenance should be, feel no surprise;
E'en while I speak will all the choir you view
Their colour change.—He who on earth, my place,
My place usurps,—my place, which in the eyes

1. This hymn is sung at the conclusion of Dante's examination by the Apostles. 10. St. Peter, St. James, St. John, and Adam. 11. St. Peter, through indignation, becomes red and inflamed like the planet Mars. 16. God himself having silenced the heavenly choir, they remain listening, while St. Peter addresses Dante. 22. "And here he directs his indignation against Boniface, who by simony was elected Pope in 1294. And he repeats three times 'my place' to show how inflamed he was against him. And he says that the said place, *i. e.* the Papal seat, is vacant in the sight of God, because the election of Boniface was not legitimate."—Ottimo Commento. See Inf. xix. 77.

Of God's own Son is vacant, hath long space
Rendered my burial ground a sink abhorred 25
Of blood and filth, which to the inveterate foe
Who fell from heaven, doth high delight afford."
Dyes of the selfsame tint which eve and morn
The clouds assume, from Phœbus' ardent glow,
Beheld I then the expanse of heaven adorn.
And like a modest damsel, who not fearing 31
For her own self, yet wears a timid mien,
The story of another's shame but hearing;
Such change the look of Beatrice displayed;
And such eclipse the heaven endured, I ween,
As when the Godhead was an offering made.
Words then proceeded from his lips, in tone 37
So greatly changed from what they were before,
Not greater was the change his face had shown.
"The spouse of Christ was nourished not of old
On mine, on Linus', and on Cletus' gore,
To teach the practice of amassing gold:
But to attain this life of happiness 43
Calixtus, Pius, Sextus, holy band,
With Urban suffered after long distress.
We never meant that Christians should be placed,
By our successors, part on the right hand,
The other part upon the left, disgraced:
Or that the keys entrusted to my care 49
Should be a sign for warriors to unfold,
And, as a standard, against Christians bear:
Or, that my image on a seal should show,
Attached to lying privileges sold;
Whence oft suffused with ruddy shame I glow.
Rapacious wolves, in shepherd's clothing dressed, 55

25. The city of Rome. 30. Heaven shows its sympathy with St. Peter by glowing with indignation; and an eclipse is said to follow, such as took place at the death of our Saviour. 40. *i. e.* "The Church was not nourished by my blood, and that of my successors, in order to encourage it in avaricious pursuits." 46. "We never meant that Bishops, abandoning their character like Boniface, should set up their standards as factious chieftains, and siding with the Guelfs, treat the Ghibelines with indignity." 53. *i. e.* Bulls and Indulgences. 55. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" Matt. vii. 15.

Are hence beheld throughout the pastures fair:
O arm of God, why art thou still at rest?
Our blood do Gascons now prepare to drink,
And Cahors' greedy sons.—O promise rare,
To what a vile conclusion dost thou sink!
But that high Providence which won for Rome 61
By Scipio's hand a glorious eminence,
Shall soon, I deem, reverse the present doom;
And thou, my son, do thou this truth reveal;
Since unto earth thou must return from hence:
What I conceal not, do not thou conceal."
As vapours through our atmosphere descending 67
Come charged with flakes of snow, when Capricorn
His horned head unto the sun is bending;
So I beheld the bright and smiling air,
Decked with triumphant Meteors, upward borne,
Which had with us been making sojourn there.
Their countenances did mine eye essay 73
To follow, till the intermediate space
Became so great, the foremost passed away.
Whereat my Lady, who anon discerned
That lost to sight was now their every trace,
Exclaimed: "Look down, and see how thou hast turned."
On bending down, I saw that from the time 79
I looked before, my progress I had made
Through a fourth portion of that sphere sublime;
So that I kenned Ulysses' track, beyond
The pass of Gades; and the shore surveyed,
Whence Jove erst bore Europa, burden fond:
And further glimpses of this little spot 85
Had I attained; but Phœbus 'neath my feet,
Entering another sign, permitted not.
The enamoured Mind, that with my Lady never
Ceases to interchange communion sweet,
Strove to attract me to her more than ever:

56. *i. e.* Bishoprics and churches. 58. Pope Clement V., a Gascon. 59. John XXII. of Cahors.—See Inf. xix. 83. 63. *i. e.* Through the instrumentality of the Emperor Henry VII.; or of Can Grande. 67. St. Peter having finished his speech, immediately the immense triumphant crowd of splendours who had descended with Christ, mount again on high. (See xxii. 131.) 82. See Inf. xxvi. 107.

And if or Nature, forms of flesh unfolding—
  Or Art, her images of fairest dye—
  E'er captive led the souls of those beholding;
All these collected would appear as nought
  Compared to the delight that met mine eye,
  When from her face one smile divine I caught.
Then she, by whom the inspiring look was given,
  Snatched me from Leda's beauteous nest away;
  And bore me upward to the swiftest heaven;
Whose liveliest and most lofty regions were
  So like each other—that I cannot say
  The part which Beatrice selected there.
But she, who saw the longing I betrayed,
  Broke into smiles, with such delight impressed,
  That God's own joy her countenance displayed.
The nature of the motion which maintains
  The centre quiet, and moves all the rest,
  As from a goal its origin here gains.
This heaven exists but in the Mind Divine,
  Where kindled is the love that whirls it round;
  And thence is showered its influence benign.
Pure light and love gird this with single zone,
  E'en as it girds the rest. He who this bound
  Hath fixed—He comprehendeth it alone.
Its motion doth no other heaven contain;
  But others take from this their measurement,
  As ten is measured both by five and twain.
How in such vessel Time its roots receives
  Unto thy mind is now made evident;
  And how in others are contained the leaves.
O lust of gold, by which is man immersed
  To such a depth, that he attempts in vain
  To draw his eyes from out thy waves accurst!
Some buds of promise may the will put forth;

98. The Gemini,—of whom Leda was the mother. 100. The uniformity of the highest sphere is intended to convey an idea of God's presence levelling all distinctions of time and place. 103. *i. e.* To understand the properties of the ninth heaven. 106. *i. e.* Of the circular motion, or Primum Mobile.—See "Material Heavens." 121 It is Beatrice who breaks out into this exclamation on the degeneracy of human nature.

But through continual beating of the rain,
The blighted fruit becomes of little worth.
In children only see we faith abound,
And simple innocence; for both have fled
Ere down upon the youthful cheek be found.
The child, yet lisping, keeps the fasts; who soon,
Advanced in years, devours or meat or bread,
Whatever be the season or the moon.
And such a one, yet lisping, loves and hears
His mother; who would wish to see her dead,
When he speaks plainly in his riper years.
So also changes soon to black from white
The daughter of yon orb, by whom is led
The morning, when he quits the shades of night.
And lest these facts should cause surprise to thee,
Know that on earth no Governor bears sway;
Whence goes astray the human family.
But ere that January fall no more
In winter, through lost seconds day by day,
So loudly shall these spheres supernal roar,
That Fortune, whence such changes we expect,
Shall turn the poops to where the prows appear:
Thus shall the fleet pursue its way direct,
And every blossom its due fruit shall bear.

CANTO XXVIII.

ARGUMENT.

Dante in the ninth heaven is vouchsafed a sight of the Deity, described as a dazzling Point, surrounded by the nine orders of angels, who correspond to the nine heavens, over which they respectively preside.

When she who doth my soul imparadise
The sad condition had to me made clear

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125. *i. e.* The continual assault of earthly cares and pleasures. 137. The Day is called the "daughter of the Sun." 140. *i. e.* The Emperor has been superseded by the Pope. 142. *i. e.* In a short space of time. The allusion is to the error in the Julian reckoning of the year, which in the course of 100 years amounting to a whole day, at last caused a necessity of correcting the calendar, as effected by Gregory XIII. 145. See note, line 63.

1. *i. e.* "Who raises my soul to the contemplation of heavenly things."

Of mortals, sunk in ignorance and vice;
As in a mirror doth a torch's light,
Suddenly flaming from behind, appear
To one who had it not in thought or sight;
Whereat he turns around, that he may know 7
If it speak truth; and such accord descries
As music hath with metre:—even so
Was I, (for memory bears it still in mind)
As I stood gazing upon those fair eyes,
Whence Love his cords obtained, my soul to bind.
And when mine eyes, on moving round, were struck 13
By that which in this volume is discerned,
When contemplated with an earnest look,
I saw a Point, whence flashed so sharp a light,
That he on whom its burning glow is turned,
To shun its splendour needs must close his sight.
The smallest star that from the earth we see, 19
Comparing star with star would to our ken,
Set by its side, a moon appear to be;
Distant—as far perhaps as from the beam
That paints it, is perceived a halo, when
Thickest the mist that shrouds the paly gleam.
Around this Point, a circling fire was hurled 25
So rapidly, that not in speed could vie
That swiftest motion which enwraps the world:
And by another this was compassed round;
This by a third, that by a fourth, and by
A fifth the fourth;—that by a sixth was bound.
A seventh followed, arching high a space 31
Of such extent, not Juno's messenger,
When most complete, could such a span embrace.
An eighth and ninth succeeded; and each zone
Rolled with a slower motion, as they were
Numbered in distance from the central One.
Of all these flames, the most sincere and sheen 37

11. In the eyes of Beatrice he saw as in a mirror that representation of God, whom on turning round he saw in reality. 14. The ninth heaven in which Dante now was. 22. Around this Point, at the distance that the halo formed by vapours is from the moon, the Angels move in nine circles of fire, corresponding to the nine heavens. 27. That of the ninth heaven. 32. Iris, or the rainbow.

Nearest the One pure Spark its lustre shed,
Because most nourished by its rays, I ween.
My tender escort, who immediate kenned
The deep suspense that racked my bosom, said:
"Heaven and all Nature on that Point depend.
Behold the circle nearest it, and know
It whirls so swift by reason of the love
That ever keeps it in a fervent glow."
"If the same order in the world obtained,
As that by which these wheels," I answered, "move,
Then should I rest in what has been explained;
But in the world of sense 'tis different far;
And more divine the things that there obtain,
The more remote they from the centre are.
Wherefore, if my desire may now repose,
In this most wondrous and angelic fane,
Which light and love alone for boundaries knows,
'Tis meet that I should learn the reason why
The copy and the model disagree;
Since I in vain to solve the question try."
"If to unravel such a knot," she said,
"Thy fingers have not the ability,
No wonder;—through neglect 'tis harder made."
My Lady spake, and added: "Would'st thou then
Allay thy thirst,—hear what I shall express;
And sharpen thus thine intellectual ken.—
The heavenly circles vary in their size,
According to the virtue, more or less,
Given to their several parts by the All-wise.
Greater the goodness, greater is the good;
And greater good requires, if equally

42. Speaking of the changes manifested by men in their pursuits from infancy to age, and their constant hope to find what they desire at a still greater distance, Dante observes: "Wherefore it is, that the one thing to be desired stands before other things in our mind's eye in a pyramidal form, so that the least at first covers them all, and is as it were the point of the ultimate desire, which is God, the base of all." Convito, Trat. xii. 12. 53. The ninth heaven. 64. *i.e.* "Since the material heavens," or "heavenly circles," vary in their size,—the largest heaven, or Primum Mobile, must necessarily be identified with the Intelligences which are nearest God, and abound most in wisdom and love, *i.e.* with the Seraphim: and so on.

The parts be filled, a greater magnitude.
Therefore the heaven which with it whirls around
The universe, doth with that sphere agree
Where Wisdom, and where Love the most abound
If then your rule of measure be applied 73
To the presiding Virtue, not to sense,
(By which these rolling circles are descried),
You will a wonderful accordance find
Of large or small, with the Intelligence
That rules each heaven, as its presiding Mind."
As, when the blast of Boreas hath passed by, 79
The atmosphere remains serene and bright,
Gladdened through all the regions of the sky—
For the dense vapours that were rife ere while
Are now dispersed; and heaven in beauty dight
On every side is beaming forth a smile:—
Such the delight I felt, when answer clear 85
Vouchsafed my gracious Lady unto me,
And made the truth like star in heaven appear.
Her gracious words now drawing to a close—
The circles shot forth sparks, e'en as we see
Sparks fly from iron that intensely glows.
Each spark emitted sparks; and they amounted 91
To many millions more than e'en the square
On chess-board in continuous doublings counted.
From choir to choir I heard Hosanna swell
Towards the fixed Point, which keeps them stedfast there
Where they have been, and shall for ever dwell.
Then she who saw my inward doubting, said: 97
"Know this—that Cherubin and Seraphin
Have in the two first circles been displayed.
Their bonds of love thus swiftly they pursue,
That to the Point resemblance they may win,—
Their power proportioned to their lofty view.
Those other loving souls which hover round 103
Are called the Thrones of the All-wise, since they

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73. "If, therefore, you judge by the endowments of the Angels, and not by the size of the circles, you will find a wonderful conformity between each of the nine heavens and their respective Intelligences, or nine orders of Angelic Directors." See "Material Heavens," at end of Introduction. 89. The nine circles of Angels.

To the first Hierarchy form a bound.
And thou shouldst know, they all enjoyment find,
As with profounder vision they survey
That perfect Truth, in which rests every mind.
Hence it is learnt how first springs Holiness 109
In the sole act of vision, not of love;
This follows afterwards, or more or less.
As the blest vision's boon is merited
By docile will and grace vouchsafed above,
So is the gift in varied measure shed.
The ensuing Hierarchy, blooming ever 115
In this abode of sempiternal spring,
Which the nocturnal Aries injures never,
Hosanna chants, with joy that knows no close,
In threefold melody—embodying
The threefold orders that the choir compose.
In this are found the triple bands divine— 121
First Dominations, Virtues secondly;—
Powers, next to these, the third in order shine.
Lo, Princedoms, and Archangels then advance,
And circling join the grand festivity;
Angels alone complete the joyous dance
These various ranks all fix their looks above, 127
And shower such influence down below, that they
All draw towards God, as they are drawn, by love.
With such desire did Dionysius try
Their numerous parts and orders to survey,
That he distinguished them as well as I.
But in their ranks some change did Gregory make; 133
Wherefore as soon as in this heaven his eyes
He opened, smiled he at his own mistake.
And if a truth so secret was displayed
By mortal man, let this not cause surprise;
For one who saw it the discovery made,
And opened up the wonders of these skies." 139

109. Dante proceeds to solve the scholastic question,—whether blessedness consists in the vision of God or in love? 115. Where the bloom of spring is not blighted, as on earth, in autumn, when Aries rises at sunset. 130. Dionysius the Areopagite, supposed to have written "Concerning the Celestial Hierarchy." See "Material Heavens," at end of the Introduction to Paradiso.

CANTO XXIX.

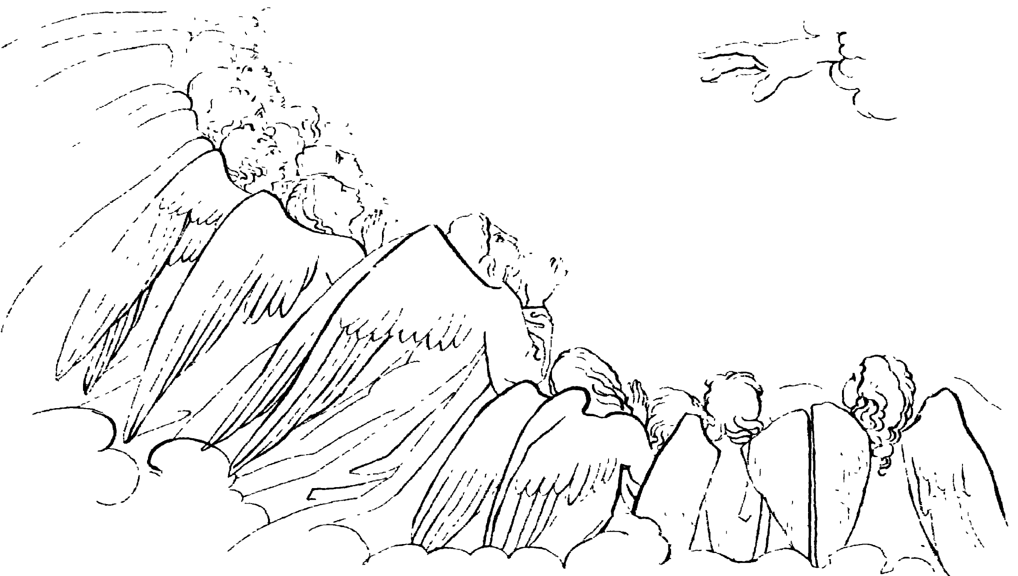
ARGUMENT.

Beatrice explains the object of God in creating the Angels and inferior beings—viz. that He delighted to multiply images of Himself. She reproves the clergy for speculating on abstruse questions, instead of spreading the Gospel; and bitterly inveighs against the Popes for their inventions of pardons and indulgences.

LONG as Latona's double progeny,
Surmounted by the Ram and by the Scales,
Facing each other horizontally,
Evenly balanced in the heaven appear,
And thus remain, until the balance fails,—
Each parting for a different hemisphere;
So long—her visage painted by a smile, 7
Silent was Beatrice—with stedfast eye
Viewing the Point which quelled my powers erewhile.
Then she: "I speak, nor ask thee to declare
Thy wish—I see it on that mirror high,
In which are present every *when* and *where*.—
Not His own blissful treasure to improve, 13
Which cannot be—but that His splendour might
Reflected say, 'I am'—the Eternal Love,
In His eternity, ere time began,
Beyond all comprehension took delight
New combinations of His love to plan.
Nor was it erst inert, as laid asleep; 19
Since there was no *Before* or *After*, ere
The Holy Spirit moved upon this deep.
Matter, and form, together joined or not,
At one unerring act created were,
As from a three-stringed bow three darts are shot.
And as the ray in amber, crystal, glass, 25
So swiftly beams, that to the sharpest eyne
From first to last no interval may pass;
So from the mind of the great Architect

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1. Apollo and Diana—synonymous with the sun and moon, which, changing hemispheres when opposite to one another, hang for a moment, one under the sign of Aries, and the other under that of Libra. 11. *i.e.* Dante's unexpressed desire to know when, where, and how the Angels were created. 20. Before creation, there was no division or succession of time. 22. In these and the following lines are described, *First*, Angels.—*Secondly*, Animal Creation —*Thirdly*, Matter.



[illegible]

Beamed forth at once the triple work Divine,
Without distinction known in the effect.
High functions to pure Substances were given, 31
When first created;—these with power were graced
To execute on earth the will of heaven.
To matter lowest station was assigned,—
Compounded natures in the middle placed,
Subject to bonds, which no one may unbind.
Long tract of ages intervened, (so taught 37
St. Jerome) after Angels were created,
Before the world was into being brought:
But the account I have inserted here
In many a page of Scripture is related,
As, if thou search it closely, will appear.
Nor doth it reasonable seem to be 43
That these prime Movers should have thus remained
So long of their perfection reft.—Now three
Of thy desires have been by me allayed,—
The history of these loving Ones explained,—
And when, and how, and where they first were made.
Sooner than twenty might be counted, fell 49
One portion of the Angelic host, and brought
Confusion to the earth on which ye dwell.
The rest remained, and in their extacy
Began this dance—with such high rapture fraught,
They hold their circling course unceasingly.
Cause of their fall was his accursed pride 55
Whom bowed 'neath burden of the world, below
Thou hast already seen. Here are descried
Those who with modesty themselves confessed
Work of His goodness unto whom they owe
The high attainments that have made them blest.
Whence through enlightening grace—from heaven obtained—
And their own merit, they raised their sight so high, 62
A will complete and stedfast have they gained.
And doubt not, but as truth my words believe,

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48. *i.e. First,* "In his Eternity."—*Secondly,* "Before Time began."—*Thirdly,* "At one unerring act." 55. Lucifer. 64. "Theologically one may say, that when the Supreme Deity, *i.e.* God, sees his creatures disposed to receive his kindness, he infuses it in measure proportioned to that state of preparation.—Oh, kind and admirable Sower, who dost not attend unless the human nature prepare the earth for sowing! Oh, happy

According as the affections open lie,
'Tis counted merit when we grace receive.
Now may this bright assembly be surveyed;
Nor to inspection is there any bar:—
My words believed, you lack no other aid.
But in your schools since such is said to be
The nature of the Angels, that they are
Endued with reason, will, and memory;
More will I add, that thou mayst fully know,
The truth, which upon earth is so concealed
By specious falsehood and vain seeming show.
These Beings, since God's face was their delight,
(In which all things lie open and revealed)
To ought beside ne'er turn away their sight:
Wherefore, not interrupted is their view
By object fresh:—their's no necessity
Transactions past by memory to renew.
Thus men on earth are dreaming, while awake,
Ignorant some—some lying knowingly;
And these of greater crime and shame partake.
In your philosophy ye do not go
By one straight path; so greatly is your wit
Transported with itself, and outward show.
And e'en this vanity moves less disgust
In heaven above, than when the Holy Writ
Despised is, or from its meaning thrust.
Ye reck not of the blood it cost to sow it,
And how acceptable to God is he
Who with humility applies to know it.
Each strives to make a show, and to be heard;
Hence the inventions and the subtlety
The Preachers use, while silent is the Word.
One says that at the death of Christ the moon
Drew back—and interposed itself between,
So that on earth no light distinctly shone:—
Others—that Light herself her beams withdrew;
So that the eclipse might visibly be seen
By Spaniard and by Indian, and by Jew.

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those who cultivate such seed in a becoming manner." Dante, Convito, Trat. iv. 21. 72. Dante does not deny that the angels possess these faculties, but attributes to them still higher faculties.

Lapi and Bindi not so numerous are 103
In Florence, as the fables that we find
Repeated in the pulpits every year;
So that the flocks, who know no better, turn
Back from their pastures having fed on wind;
And vainly plead they could not fraud discern.
Christ said not to his earliest congregation, 109
'Go, and with lies the people lead astray,'
But, 'Testify the truth to every nation:'
And this injunction they so well obeyed,
Fighting the battle of the faith,—that they
Their shields and lances of the Gospel made.
Now goes the Preacher forth with quibbles, and 115
Buffooneries; and if a laugh he raise,
He swells his cowl, and makes no more demand.
But in that cowl such Bird doth build its nest,
That could the people on his features gaze,
They'd see the pardon whereupon they rest;
And after which the world is now so mad, 121
That faith in any kind of promise may,
Without a voucher for its truth, be had.
Battens his hog on these St. Anthony,
And many others, worse than hogs; who pay
In uncoined money for the goods they buy.
But since digression has caused much delay, 127
Towards the straight path do thou direct thine eyes,
That both the time be shortened and the way.
Up to such myriads do these Natures mount,
That they surpass our finite faculties;
Nor tongue, nor fancy may their numbers count:
And if thou mark what Daniel hath revealed, 133
Thou'lt see that in the thousands he assumes,
The real number is in fact concealed.
The primal Light, who sheds His rays o'er all,
With grace as various each of them illumes,

103. *i.e.* Rogues and traitors. 111. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature" Mark xvi. 15. 118. *i.e.* Could the people see the devil in the Priest's cowl, they would know the nature of the Indulgences on which they blindly rely. 124. St. Anthony is painted with a pig at his feet, as a symbol of the devil, whom he vanquished. 133. "Thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him." Daniel vii. 10.

As are the forms on which His splendours fall :
And as according to the light that flows 139
On each, their fervour differs in degree,
Thus love's sweet flame with varied ardour glows.
Since then so multiplied the Mirrors are
Wherein the Eternal parts Himself, while He,
Whole as before, remaineth One—how far
Surpassing thought His height and breadth must be!" 145

CANTO XXX.

ARGUMENT.

In the empyrean, or heaven of pure light, Dante is vouchsafed a sight of the celestial Host. Angels and Saints, clad in white robes, and seated on thrones, are beholding themselves in the river of God—*i.e.* enjoying the fulness of grace, in the immediate presence of the Deity.

SIX thousand miles, perchance, from us are glowing 1
The noontide rays, while in this hemisphere
Already are the shadows downward bowing,
When from the midst of heaven's vast cope unfurled
Above us, now begins to disappear
Some star, beheld in this our nether world :
And as the glorious handmaid of the day 7
Advances farther, star by star is gone,
Until at last the fairest melts away ;
E'en so the Triumph, ever dancing round
The Point which dazzled me to look upon,
(Seeming enclosed by that Itself doth bound),
By slow degrees was from my sight removed ; 13
Wherefore, deprived of such bright imagery,
I turned again mine eyes on Her I loved.
If all that hath been written in her praise
In one encomium could included be,
'Twere slight, compared with that I now would raise.
Beauty I saw transcending human sense 19

142. God is represented as a Mirror, which, by an act of love, He voluntarily breaks into ten thousand pieces, each reflecting an image of Himself, without injuring His own Unity.

10. *i.e.* "As in another hemisphere the stars seen above this, disappear at dawn, so the vision of the triumphant hosts vanished away. These, dancing around the throne, appear to encompass the Deity, whereas they are in truth encompassed by Him. 19. Beatrice.

So far, that He who fashioned it, alone
Reaps the full measure of enjoyment thence.
Wishing to paint it, feel I such despair,
That into greater trouble am I thrown
Than tragic bards or comic ever were;
For as the sun o'erpowers the enfeebled eye, 25
So, the remembrance of that smile divine
Robs me of every mental faculty.
From the first day her countenance was seen
By me on earth, till this full view was mine,
My raptured song hath ne'er suspended been.
But now 'tis time I set the attempt aside 31
To trace her beauty in my feeble lays,
As Artist, who his utmost skill hath plied:
And even so, I leave the theme to those
Whose loftier trumpet may record her praise;
Bringing this arduous subject to a close.
With gesture and with look commanding, she 37
Began: "From out the vast celestial zone,
Unto the heaven of light arrived are we—
Light intellectual, and full of love,
Love of true bliss, where every joy is known,
Joy, every other sweetness far above.
Here shall the twofold bands of Paradise 43
Be seen by thee—one clad in the same dress
That at the Judgment shall delight thine eyes."
Like to a flash, which bursting suddenly
Upon the visual power, doth so oppress
The sense, that plainest things we may not see;
Thus was a living light around me brought, 49
Whose dazzling veil made all things disappear,
So that mine eyesight could distinguish nought.
"The Love, that calms this tranquil heaven, the same
Sweet influence sheds on all within its sphere;
Making the candle suited to its flame."
When these brief words were in my mind received, 55

38. *i.e.* From the Primum Mobile, which encircles the other heavens. 43. *i.e.* Of Angels and of Saints. 52. Beatrice speaks—comforting Dante by the assurance, that God, who is ever dispensing his grace to those who approach him, is now preparing his soul to sustain the brightness of his glory.

My Virtue was transported to such height,
I could not in that fervour have believed.
And with fresh power my vision was renewed,
So that no ray, however purely bright,
The vigour of mine eyes could have subdued.
Light I beheld, that like a stream was flowing
All bright with silver rays, two banks between,
In hues of spring most marvellously glowing.
Forth from the river, living Sparks arose,
Which, mid the Flowers alighting, shone serene,
E'en as enchased in gold the ruby shows.
Then, as inebriate with the odorous sense,
Again they plunged within the mystic flood;
And as one entered, rose another thence.
"The strong desire by which thou art possessed
To understand the wonders thou hast viewed,
Pleases me more, the more it fills thy breast.
But ere a thirst so great may be allayed,
Behoves thee of this limpid stream to drink."
So spake the Sun, whereon my eyes were stayed:
Then added: "Know, the stream, and Topazes,
Which come and go, disporting o'er the brink,
The smiling Flowers too, are but images
That shadow forth their truth:—and though these things
Are easy of themselves, thou lackest power
To reach, as yet, such high imaginings."
A babe turns not its face more eagerly
To seek its mother's milk, if late the hour
To which its sleep hath been prolonged—than I
Turn'd, to make better mirrors of mine eyes,
Bending me downward to the wave profound,
That to the sight new holiness supplies.
And as the fringes of mine eyelids neared
The sacred stream, I saw its form was round,
Instead of long, as lately it appeared.
Then, like to persons that a mask have worn,

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61. "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb." Rev. xxii. 1.
76. The Topazes are the same as the Sparks (lines 64, 94.) These and the Flowers symbolically represent the Angels and Saints which are presently revealed. 90. The stream is round, as returning constantly to God, its original source.

Who seem a different aspect to present,
  When from their features the disguise is torn;
E'en so, methought, the Flowers and Sparks, (impelled
  To greater joy) such changes underwent,—
  Heaven's twofold Courts distinctly I beheld.
O splendour of the Godhead, by whose aid 97
  I saw the triumph of the kingdom true,
  Give me the power to tell what I surveyed!
A light there is above, which plainly shows
  The great Creator to the creature, who
  In seeing Him alone can find repose;
And in a circle spreads to such degree, 103
  That for the sun would its circumference
  A girdle of too great dimensions be;—
All its appearance one vast ray of light,
  Reflected from the swiftest heaven, which thence
  Derives both its existence and its might.
And as a cliff looks down upon the bed 109
  Of some clear stream, to see how richly crowned
  With flowers and foliage is its lofty head;
So, all from earth who hither e'er returned,
  Seated on more than thousand thrones around,
  Within the Eternal Light themselves discerned:
And if the very lowest tier receives 115
  A light so great, how wonderful must be
  This rose expanded in its utmost leaves!
Mine eyes, nor by the amplitude nor height,
  Were dazzled, but took in the quantity
  And quality of all that vast delight.
Distant or near—'tis still the same; for where 121
  God without secondary causes sways,
  The law of Nature hath no influence there.
Within the yellow of the Rose eternal
  In layers expanded, redolent of praise
  Unto the Sun whose beams are ever vernal,
Like one who her desire to speak suppresses, 127
  Me Beatrice drew with her; as she cried;

103. The boundlessness of Divine Grace is described. 109. The poet bodies forth an immense amphitheatre, from which the Saints, arrayed like the leaves of a full blown white rose, and seated on thrones, are beholding themselves in the mirror of God's countenance.

"See the vast number of these snow white dresses!
See how extensive is our City!—see
Our benches are so nearly occupied,
That few new comers may admitted be!
In that great seat whereon the lofty crown 133
Holds in attracted gaze thy wondering eye,
Ere to this marriage supper thou sit down,
Shall be enthroned imperial Henry, who
Will come to re-establish Italy,
But ill disposed for regulations new.
The blind desire that constitutes your curse 139
Hath made you like the infant babe, who dies
Of hunger, and yet drives away the nurse:
And such a Pontiff then your Church shall sway,
That he by open arms and subtleties
The efforts of great Henry shall gainsay.
But from his holy office soon shall God 145
Expel, and drive him down to that foul place
Where Simon Magus hath his curst abode,—
To depth profounder thrusting Boniface."

129. Angels are passing to and fro among the Saints, clad in white robes. Rev. vii. 13. 130 The heavenly Jerusalem. 136. Henry of Luxemburg, made Emperor in 1308, enjoyed the highest renown among the princes of his age. He was hailed in Italy as "an Angel of God," and to him Dante wrote an elaborate epistle, still extant. His object of tranquillising that country, and reconciling contending factions was defeated by the jealousy, and secret hostility of Clement V. who stirred up the Guelfs to rebel against him. Unfortunately, he spent a whole summer at the siege of Brescia—where he lost his health, instead of marching direct to Rome. After vain attempts on Rome and Florence, when too late, he was taken ill. He died very suddenly, at Buonconvento; and is said to have been poisoned by a Dominican Friar, bribed by Clement, and his allies, the French Princes. To this story Napier gives no credit: but Rossetti declares, that having weighed the conflicting evidence, he believes in the murder.—considers him the victim of Clement's perfidy, and excuses his credulity, "in supposing the Vicar of Christ could not have been guilty of such a league of treachery." (Notizione sull Imperadore Arrigo di Luxemburg, prefixed to vol. 2 of Rossetti's comment on Dante.) "Death saved the Italians from his sovereignty; but his life might have made them a strong, united, and ultimately an independent people." Napier, Florentine History. 142. Pope Clement V. 147. *i.e.* Where the simoniacal Popes are fixed in circular holes with their heads downwards. It is prophesied that Boniface "quel d'Alagno," shall soon be thrust down still lower on the arrival of his successor Clement. See Inf. xix. 73, &c.

CANTO XXXI.

ARGUMENT.

Description of the heavenly Rose continued. St. Bernard is sent by Beatrice, who is still visible at a distance through the transparent empyrean. Dante contemplates the Virgin Mary.

Arrayed in semblance of a snow-white Rose, 1
That holy army was revealed to sight,
Which for his Spouse, in death our Saviour chose.
But the winged Cherubs that behold and sing
His praise whose chords of love to love invite,
And laud the goodness of their heavenly King,
(E'en as a troop of bees now seek the flowers, 7
And now return with their delicious store,
To lay it up amid their waxen bowers)—
On the vast flower descended from above,
Whence from its numerous leaves again they soar
Back to the realm where ever dwells their Love.
The looks of all were bright with living flame, 13
With gold their pinions—and their forms so white,
No snow such perfect purity could claim.
Fanning their plumage, as with wing untired
From round to round they on the flower alight,
They impart the peace and love they have acquired.
Nor by their rapid passage, as they fly 19
Betwixt the Flower and Fountain of their bliss,
Was aught of splendour lost unto mine eye.
For through the world the Ray divine is sent
Where e'er most worthy of that light it is;
Nought having power to cause impediment.
In this blest realm where spirits of ancient days 25
And modern meet, in endless bliss to dwell,
All to one Point their sight and ardours raise.
O Trinal Light—Thyself one single Star,
Who with thy sparks contentest them so well,
Look down, and see the storm in which we are!
If the Barbarians, (coming from that land 31
O'er which, as round she wheels with her dear son,

25. The "spirits of ancient and modern days" are the twofold band before mentioned, viz. Angels and Saints. The eyes of both are fixed on Christ. 30. *i.e.* The distress of Italy—tost like a vessel in the tempest, as described Purg. vi. 77.

Doth Helicë take up her daily stand)
Beholding Rome and all her buildings vast,
When like the Lateran mortal works were none,
Into extreme astonishment were cast;
I who from earth to an immortal fane 37
Had passed,—from time into eternity—
From Florence to a people just and sane—
What fulness of astonishment was mine!
Surely betwixt amaze and joy did I
To shut my ears, and close my lips incline.
And like a pilgrim who with fond delight 43
Surveys at length the temple of his vow,
And hopes one day its wonders to recite;
So through that living light with searching ken
The varied ranks I contemplated,—now
Aloft, now down, now round and round again.
Looks I beheld, to charity inviting, 49
Decked with another's light, and their own smile,
And gestures, every seemly grace uniting.
The general outline now of Paradise
My sight had comprehended; though the while
On no one part were firmly fixed my eyes:
And with rekindled eagerness I sought 55
Some knowledge from my Lady's lips to draw
Of things which were suspended in my thought.
I meant one thing—another met my sight;—
I looked around for Beatrice, but saw
An old man, like the rest in raiment bright.
Over his cheek and brow was shed a beam 61
Of joy benignant and compassionate,
Such as a tender father might beseem.
"And where is she?" I suddenly inquire.
Then he: "To terminate thy anxious state,
I left my place by Beatrice' desire.
Look up, and there will she be seen again 67

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33. The land round which Helice, *i.e.* the Ursa Major, wheels, is that to the north, whence the barbarians came; her son—Bootes. 39. Bitter is the reproach conveyed in this contrast of the heavenly Jerusalem with the injustice, the disunion, and the madness of the Florentine people. 50. *i.e.* With the light of God. 59. Beatrice had returned to her seat, in the highest grade of the third circle of the Rose; and in her stead St. Bernard appears, clad in the white robes of the Saints.

Within the third and most exalted round,
Throned in the seat that her deserts obtain."
Without a word, I raised mine eyes above,
And saw her with a beauteous chaplet crowned,
Reflecting the eternal rays of love.
So great a distance is not mortal eye, 73
When in the lowest depth of ocean cast,
From that high realm whence thunder rends the sky,
As was my sight from Beatrice removed;
And yet the intervening distance vast
No obstacle to clearest vision proved.
"O Lady, upon whom my hope is placed, 79
And who, salvation to work out for me,
Hast left Hell's precincts with thy footsteps traced,—
To thee my praise and gratitude are due,
Whose grace and power enabled me to see
The wondrous things here opened to my view.
A slave before, thou hast released me—thou 85
By every art and mode that could be tried
Didst win the freedom that I cherish now.
Continue thy munificence to me,
So that my soul, which thou hast purified,
May quit its mortal bonds, approved by thee."
Such was my prayer.—With smile upon her face 91
She looked on me, although so far removed,
Then turned to the Eternal Fount of grace.
Whereat the aged Saint: "To happy end
That thou mayest bring thy steps, by Heaven approved,—
Which Prayer and Love enjoined me to befriend,—
Over this garden now direct thy sight; 97
So shall thy visage more acute be made
To bear the fervour of the heavenly Light.
And may the Queen of heaven, who in my heart
Kindles the flame of love, her gracious aid
For her devoted Bernard's sake, impart."
Like one who, from Croatia come to see 103
Our Veronica, (image long adored)
Gazes, as though content he ne'er could be,—

81. Beatrice went down to Limbo to persuade Virgil to assist Dante. (Inf. ii. 52.) 104. The Veron Icon, or true resemblance, is a picture of Christ supposed to have been miraculously imprinted upon a handkerchief preserved in the Church of St. Peter at Rome.

Thus musing, while the relic is portrayed,—
"Jesus my God, my Saviour and my Lord,
O were thy features these I see displayed!"
E'en such was I, while feasting on the view 109
Of his warm charity, who here below
That blessed peace by contemplation knew.
Then he: "O son of grace!—while such amaze
Wraps thee, this blessed life thou canst not know,
Holding thine eyes bent down in wondering gaze,
But view the circles, e'en the most remote, 115
Until the Queen upon her throne thou seest,
To whom this realm is subject and devote."
I raised mine eyes;—and as in morning's pride
More beauteous are the regions of the east
Than where the sun declines at eventide;
So, with my eyesight travelling, as it were, 121
From vale to mount, I saw the extremity
More decked with splendour than the front appear.
And as on earth the horizon glows more bright
Where Phœbus is expected, while the sky
In other quarters shows diminished light;
So, in the midst, a livelier lustre wore 127
That peaceful Oriflame; while either side
Relaxed the flame that lighted it before:
And in that centre, with their wings outspread,
Thousands of joyous Angels I descried,
On each of whom a different ray was shed.
At their festivity and gladsome song 133
I saw the Virgin smile, whose rapture shot
Joy through the eyes of all that blessed throng:
And even did the words that I possess
Equal imagination, I should not
Dare the attempt her faintest charms to express.
When Bernard now perceived mine eyes intent, 139
And stedfast fixed upon her glowing flame,
His eyes with holiest love on her were bent;
So that more ardent still my gaze became.

116. The Virgin Mary. 128. This term, in its original signification denoting a signal of war, is here applied with the epithet "peaceful" to the Virgin Mary.

CANTO XXXII.

ARGUMENT.

St. Bernard points out the two divisions of the Rose—viz. the Saints of the Old, and of the New Testament. Among these are seen Adam and Eve—John the Baptist—the Virgin Mary—the Angel Gabriel—St. Peter, &c. &c.

Gazing on her whose Son brought peace to man, 1
That meditative soul instruction sweet
Poured forth, and thus in holy words began:
"The ancient wound that Mary bound and healed,
She opened, who is sitting at her feet,
In form of perfect loveliness revealed.
Beneath her, ranking in the third degree, 7
Is Rachel seated further, at the side
Of Beatrice, as thou thyself mayst see.
Sarah, Rebecca, Judith, Ruth, who gave
An ancestress to the sweet Bard that cried,
(His sin lamenting) 'Pity me, and save,'
Arranged in various rows thou mayst survey, 13
As I shall call them by their several names,
While upward through the Rose I make my way.
Lo, sit in different degrees of power,
Each side the seventh step, the Hebrew Dames,
Dividing every petal of the Flower:
For these are, as it were, a wall between 19
The sacred stairs, dividing it in twain,
According as their faith in Christ hath been.
On this side, where the Rose may be perceived
Perfect throughout its leaves, their ranks maintain
Those who on Christ about to come believed:
Where on the other, intervals are made— 25
The semicircles showing vacancy—
Are those whose eyes on Christ revealed were stayed.

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2. St. Bernard—who is still gazing upon the Virgin Mary. See end of last canto. She, having healed the wound that Eve had inflicted on mankind, is represented with the latter sitting at her feet. 8. In the Purgatorio, (xxvii. 104.) she is the type of Contemplation, and here sits by the side of heavenly Wisdom, as see in Inferno, ii. 102. 11 The Miserere, or 51st Psalm—composed after the murder of Uriah. 19 The Rose is divided into two compartments, consisting of those before, and those after Christ, *i.e.* the Saints of the Old and of the New Testament.

And as on this hand, 'twixt the glorious throne
Of heaven's bright Lady, and the seats that lie
Beneath her, such an ample space is shown;
So also yonder, where St. John appears,—
Who, always holy, the rough desert bore,
And martyrdom and hell for two long years.
And underneath him form a severing bound
Francis, Augustin, Benedict, and more,
Who downward fill the seats from round to round.
Now contemplate the Providence divine;
Whence Faith, as viewed on its two several sides,
Shall equally in this fair garden shine.
And know that downward from the lofty throne,
Which in the middle the two parts divides,
No one is there through merit of his own,
But through Another's; and upon conditions;
For all these souls freed from the body were,
Ere upon choice were founded their volitions.
This may you be convinced of (if due pains
You take to mark them, and their accents hear)
Both by their looks, and by their childish strains.
Yet now you doubt, and still your doubts withhold:
But though your bonds are intricate, yet I
Will strive your subtle reasonings to unfold.
Within this peaceful kingdom's wide domain
No room is to be found for casualty,
No dwelling there for hunger, thirst, or pain:
For in this realm is stablished every thing
Under the sanction of eternal laws,
As to the finger answereth a ring;
Therefore the children that herein do press
To life eternal, not without a cause
Inherit excellence or more or less.
The King who makes this blessed realm to bask
In love and joy, (so that throughout its space
No one for more could e'en desire to ask)

29. The Virgin Mary. 33. The two years St. John the Baptist is said to have been in Hell, *i.e.* in Limbo, are those which intervened between his death and that of our Saviour, who then liberated him together with other souls. See Inf. iv. 53. 35. Of these three Saints, see x. 120, xi. 50, and xxii. 40. 38. *i.e.* The Elect of the New Testament shall equal those of the Old.

Their souls creating in his glad aspect,
As pleased him best, to each a different grace
Distributes; and let here suffice the effect.
And this disparity of mortals' doom 67
Scripture marks clearly in the twins of old
Who struggled when within their mother's womb.
Wherefore, as is the colour of the hair,
So doth the Light divine, as meet we hold,
Assign the wreaths of grace—to each his share.
Hence, not in guerdon of their deeds on earth, 73
In various degrees of rank they sit,
Differing but as grace differed at their birth.
To hold the faith the parent held before,
Sufficed, with innocence, to make them fit
To obtain salvation in the days of yore.
After the earliest ages had passed by, 79
The wing of innocence in every male
By circumcision gained fresh purity:
But when the time of grace to man was willed,
Then innocence became of no avail,
Unless the rite of baptism were fulfilled.
Look now upon the face that chiefly Christ 85
Resembles; since the glory it imparts
May give thee power to see the face of Christ."
I looked, and witnessed such intense delight
Showered down upon her by those Angel hearts,
(Gifted with wings to fly around the height)
That all the sights which I had seen before 91
To raise such wonderment could not avail,
Nor such a likeness to the Godhead bore.
And now that Angel who erewhile descended,
And seeing Mary, cried: "Hail, Mary, hail,"
In front of her his radiant wings extended.
An answer to that minstrelsy divine 97
Rang through the courts of heaven; so that each face
With more serenity was seen to shine.
"O Holy Father, who dost deign for me

68. "Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord; yet I loved Jacob." Malachi i. 2.: as referred to by St. Paul, Romans ix. 13, with regard to the preference of the Jews to the Gentiles. 85. The face oft he Virgin Mary.

To come below from that delightful place,
In which thou sittest everlastingly,
Who is that Angel, whom such joys inspire, 103
The eyes beholding of our heavenly Queen,—
Enamoured so, that he appears on fire?"
Him I again thus questioned, upon whom
Mary her beauty was reflecting, e'en
As doth the Sun the morning star illume.
"Delight and confidence," he answered me, 109
"Great as angelic spirits may attain,
Exist in him, by Heaven's all-wise decree:
For he it was who with the tidings came
To Mary, when the Son of God was fain
To bear the burden of our mortal frame.
But as I go conversing on the way, 115
Lift up thine eyes, and, casting them around,
The nobles of this pious realm survey.
Those two, who on their thrones above repose—
Most blest, since nearest to Augusta found—
Are the twin roots of this celestial Rose.
He, who is sitting near her on the left, 121
Is that great Sire, through whose temerity
Mankind were of their happiness bereft.
Upon the right that ancient Priest behold
Of holy Church, to whom the double key
Of this bright Flower by Christ was given of old.
Beside him sitteth He, who, ere he died, 127
Was witness unto all Her long distress
Who through the spear and nails became a bride.
On the other side is seen the Chief, who led
The ungrateful people through the wilderness—
Perverse, rebellious, though with manna fed.
Opposite Peter Anna sits, nor moves 133
Her eyes while chanting her sweet psalmody,
Through joy to contemplate the child she loves.
And opposite the mighty Sire of men,
Sits Lucia, who thy Lady sent to thee,
When o'er the dangerous brink was sunk thy ken.

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106. St. Bernard 127. St. John,—who before he died witnessed the distresses of the Church. See xi. 32. 133. Anna is the mother of the Virgin. 137. Sent by Beatrice to rescue Dante. See Inf. ii. 97.

But since the allotted vision soon must cease, 139
Here pause we—like a skilful tailor, who
Will cut the coat according to the piece.
Towards the First Love direct we now our eyes,
That of his glory thou mayst snatch a view,
As far as given to mortal faculties.
But truly, lest, the while thy wings are strained, 145
Thinking to make advance, thou retrograde,
Behoves thee that by prayer be grace obtained—
Grace at her hands who can such gift impart;
And my request do thou so warmly aid,
That with my prayer accordant be thy heart:"
This holy supplication then he made.

CANTO XXXIII.

ARGUMENT.

St. Bernard invokes the Virgin Mary in behalf of Dante's desire to see our Saviour. Favoured with the beatific vision, he describes the Trinity. Christ once beheld, he undergoes such a change, that his own will gives place to the will of God.

"O VIRGIN Mother, daughter of thy Son! 1
Humblest, yet most exalted of our race,
Forecast of counsel in the Eternal One,—
Man's nature thou didst raise to such high station,
That his Creator thought it no disgrace
To vail His glory in His own creation.
Within thy womb renewed its ancient power 7
That love, beneath whose vivifying glow
Put forth its buds in peace this blessed Flower.
Here unto us a mid-day torch thou art
Of Charity; and unto men below
The living streams of Hope thou dost impart.
Lady, to thee such worth and power are given, 13
That whoso grace desires, and asks not thee,
Desires to fly, without a wing, to heaven.
Thy kindness succoureth not him alone
Who asks thy aid; but oft spontaneously
Runs in advance, and is, unasked for, shown.

151. See commencement of next canto.

1. St. Bernard speaks.

In thee dwells Mercy—Pity dwells in thee— 19
In thee Munificence—in thee abounds
Whate'er of Goodness may in creature be.
This man, who from the nethermost abyss
Of all the world, hath in their several rounds
Beheld the spirits, or of woe or bliss,
Implores thy aid to renovate his sight, 25
So that his eyes invigorate and strong,
May look on his Salvation's utmost height:
And I, who never longed myself to gain
That view more warmly than for him I long,
Urge all my prayers; (and may they not be vain)
That by thy prayers thou would'st dispel each cloud 31
Of the mortality that dims his brow;
So unto him may God his face unshroud.
And I again implore thee, glorious Queen,
Whose power is equal to thy will, do thou
Guard his affections—such high vision seen:
Aid him each earth-born impulse to withstand— 37
Behold how Beatrice, and all the blest
Assist me while I pray with clasped hand."
Those eyes beloved of God and held most dear,
Fixed on the suppliant orator, expressed
How grateful to her soul are prayers sincere.
Then to the Light Eternal were they raised,— 43
On which created being, though endued
With sharpest ken, so clearly never gazed:
And I who to the End of all desire
Was now approaching, quenched, as meet I should,
The ardour of my soul-consuming fire.
Bernard made signal to me with a smile 49
To look above; but of myself had I
Anticipated his desire the while;
For now my vision, clearer than before,
Within that Beam of perfect Purity
And perfect Truth was entering more and more.
From this time forward that which filled my sight 55
Became too lofty for our mortal strains;
And memory fails to take so vast a flight.
Like him who in a dream some object sees;

22. Dante

And when the dream hath passed away, retains
The impression, though impaired its images;
E'en so am I; who though hath sunk to nought 61
The sight I saw entranced, yet in my mind
Feel all the sweetness that the vision wrought.
Before the sun thus melts the snow away;—
Thus, at the impulse of a gentle wind,
Were swept the traces of the Sybil's lay.
O Sovran Light! who dost exalt thee high 67
Above all thoughts that mortal may conceive,
Recall thy semblance to my mental eye;
And let my tongue record the wondrous story,
That I to nations yet unborn may leave
One spark at least of thy surpassing glory:
So, my verse rising to a higher sound, 73
And memory taught the vision to retrace,
More glory to thy Victory shall redound.
I deem the splendour of that living ray,
Had dashed to earth my every hope of grace,
Had I shrunk back and turned mine eyes away:
But I remember well that I became 79
Bolder, until my eyes endured the sight,
And reached the utmost splendour of the Flame.
O plenteous Grace that nerved my soul to raise
So fixt a look on the Eternal Light,
That I achieved the object of my gaze!
Within its depth I saw that by the chains 85
Of love, in one sole volume was confined
Whate'er the universal world contains;—
Substance, and accident—their properties,
Together in such wondrous manner joined,
One glimpse is all my utmost skill supplies.
Methinks I saw the universal mould 91
Of all this globe;—such thrilling extasy
Expands my heart, as I the sight unfold.
Deeper oblivion hath one moment made
In me, than all the centuries gone by

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75. The victory of Christ crucified. 88. Substance, that which subsists of itself—accident, that which subsists in dependence on another. 91. *i.e.* "One moment, elapsed after the vision, occasioned a greater forgetfulness of what he had seen, than the five and twenty centuries elapsed since the Argonaut expedition, had occasioned of that event."—Lombardi.

Have of the enterprise when Argo's shade
Astonished Neptune :—rivetted and bent
So wholly was my mind upon that Light,
And ever kindling to fresh wonderment.
Such one becomes, admiring that blest Ray,
That, whatsoever else allure the sight,
Impossible it is to turn away ;
Because the one sole wished for Good is there,
And every thing defective elsewhere found,
In it is perfected beyond compare.
Henceforth my accents will be more compressed
(So scant is memory) than is the sound
By infant uttered at the mother's breast.
Not, that the living Light I looked on, wore
Multiform aspects ;—since for aye the same
It still continued as it was before ;—
But to mine eyes increase of strength now flowing—
That Object upon which was fixed their aim,
Seemed, as I changed, in varied aspects glowing.
Within that Essence, glorious and profound,
Three Circles I beheld—of triple hue,
Though of an equal measurement around :—
The One the reflex of the other, e'en
As Iris of herself ; and from the Two
Equally breathed, the Third like fire was seen.
Oh ! how are words unable to express
My least conception of what then I viewed !
And even this how infinitely less !
O Light Eternal, in thyself alone
Enshrined, and by Thee only understood,
Object of love and joy to Thee alone !
That second Circle, which, conceived in Thee,
Was like in semblance to reflected light,—
When somewhat steadily observed by me,
Was painted inwardly, methought, in hue

109. *i.e.* "Let it not be thought that in God was any change of aspect, since He is immutable ; but know, that owing to the strength my eyes acquired by contemplation, I distinguished the three Persons of the Trinity." 125. Speaking of the Empyrean in his Convito, Dante says : "This quiet and peaceful heaven is the seat of that Supreme Deity who alone possesses a full knowledge of Himself." Trat. ii. cap. 4. See Purg. xxviii. 91.

The same with which is our own image dight,
Wherefore on it I wholly bent my view.
Geometrician, searching eagerly 133
To square the circle, seeks and seeks in vain
A principle that may his wants supply ;—
Such my desire to learn how could combine
The Circle and the Image, and to gain
A knowledge of their Unity Divine.
But vainly my own wings to this aspired ; 139
When such a splendour struck me from above,
It straight accomplished all I had desired.
The glorious Vision here my powers o'ercame ;—
But now my will and wish were swayed by Love—
(As turns a wheel on every side the same)
Love—at whose word the sun and planets move.

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136. *i.e.* "Such was my anxiety to comprehend how the Divine and human nature of Christ were united,—a mystery revealed to me only by an extraordinary infusion of Divine Grace." 143. "God, the first source, being reached and seen, nothing more can be desired, since he is Alpha and Omega.... The work ends in God who is blessed for evermore." Dedication of the Paradiso.

END OF PARADISO.

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THE END.

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